

FINAL FANTASY[®] III

PLAYERS GUIDE

Your Only Hope
For Survival.



Peter
Olafson

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To my wife, Evelyn, who is indifferent to video games.

Contents

Acknowledgements.	viii
About the Author.	ix
About the Book	xi
Introduction: The Story So Far	xiii
Part 1: Up and Running	I
Part 2: In Search of Terra	31
Part 3: In the Enemy's Back Yard	45
Part 4: Of Espers and Treachery	57
Part 5: Not With A Whimper	79
Part 6: A New World	89
Part 7: The Roads Not Taken: Tying Up Loose Ends	105
Part 8: Endgame: Going After the Big K	141
Part 9: Maps of Final Fantasy III	155

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About the Author

Peter Olafson, 38, has been writing about computer and video games for almost six years. He is a regular contributor to **GamePro** and **Electronic Entertainment** magazines and games editor for **AmigaWorld**. Olafson has also written gaming columns for **PC Games** and **Compute**, and his work has appeared in **Computer Gaming World**.

Before he started writing about games, Olafson spent nine years as a newspaper reporter, feature writer, and movie critic. He lives in Hoboken, New Jersey, with his wife, Evelyn, and a wide range of tame and semi-tame creatures — none of them from Final Fantasy III.

About the Book

It is one thing to simply tell a story. It is another to reveal the workings of a world. I've sought to do both here.

Naturally, the basic idea of this guide is to show you how to win the game. That's a pretty long road all by itself.

But as mentioned earlier, the path through FF3 can be far longer and twisted than it first appears. The story has "branches" in which different events occur differently based on what you've done earlier in the game. It has side roads that have been so well camouflaged with bushes that you may not find them without a nudge.

You can lose a valuable character for good in mid-game unless you're careful, and other characters you may never find unless you're thorough and willing to experiment.

So the approach here is a bit different than the one you may have seen in other hint books. There's winning, sure. And then there's the rest of the world.

How extensive is it? *Extensive*. Let me put it this way. I lived with Final Fantasy III intimately for about eight weeks straight, to the point at which I was dreaming about it, thinking about it on the bus, when picking up light bulbs at the market, or walking the dog. I tried doing things one way, and then I went back and tried them another. And then a third way.

As this book goes to press, I'm *still* finding things I didn't know about. There are limits even to what can be stuffed into a 24-megabit video game cart, but playing FF3 is rather like living in a world. The room you're in may be familiar. But then there's a closet, and the closet has a mouse hole in the corner and the mouse has this closet.

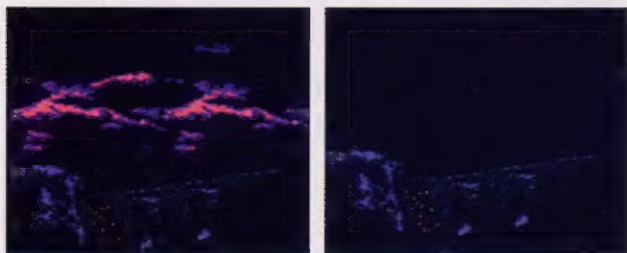
That's one reason the book is broken up into bite-sized peeks at certain aspects of the game.

That's why I'll occasionally lead you on little "world tours" in which we'll try to tie up loose ends and discover that other ends you thought were tied up have come loose.

And because it feels like a world, I've used real-world directions rather than TV-screen directions. North and south correspond to up and down and west and east to left and right.

So keep your mind open, your best weapons equipped, and your Espers and Relics warm and running. You've taken the right road by picking this book up, but it's a long, long way home.

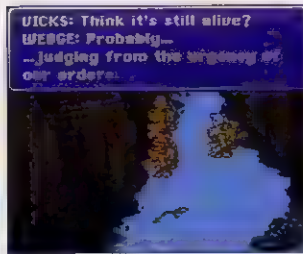
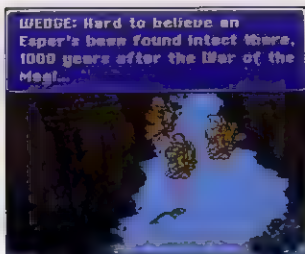
Introduction: The Story So Far



It begins, as stories so often begin, at night and in a storm. Lightning purples the clouds over Narshe. Snow covers the road so well that one would not know there was a road, but for the hedges beside it. The horizon is in darkness, and all the traveler can hear is the wind.

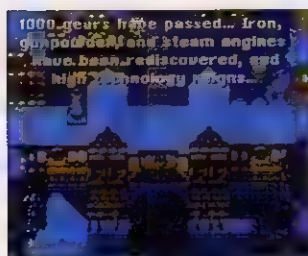
No time to be out and about, certainly. At least not by choice.

But this is not choice; this is duty. Two men in the heavy Magitek armor of the Empire — a kind of metal overall thick with weapons — trudge west with the grim persistence of soldiers. On high ground east of town, they pause to assess the situation.

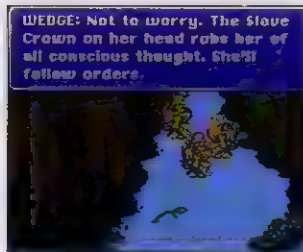
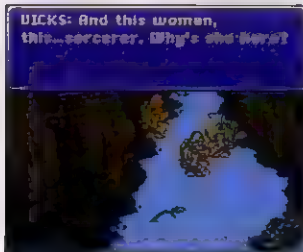


Word is that an Esper — an almost mythical creature from an almost forgotten era — has been found frozen, under the town of Narshe. The Emperor Gestahl wants it. The soldiers do not know why, but they know better than to question; they must do their master's bidding.

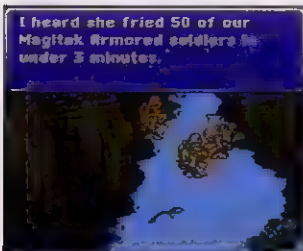
And so the soldiers, with the grim names of Vicks and Wedge, walk at night in the snow toward the lights that have begun to glimmer in a junction of distant cliffs.



Narshe is a northern, industrial town with its back to iron hills. It's a place of turning wheels and gears, steam engines, geothermal heat — a jewel in the crown of technology, that modern magic. A strange place for a magical beast to surface, and yet an appropriate one, for it was technology that found it — in a new mine shaft.

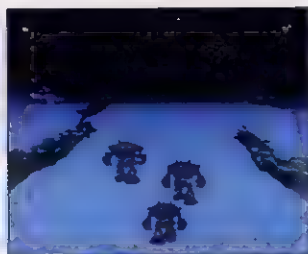
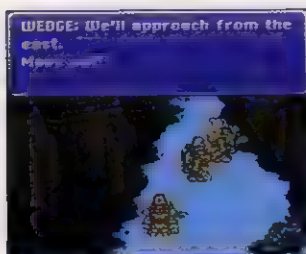


The soldiers are not alone. Behind them is a woman in the same armor...and a curious headdress. She is something of a mystery to her companions. If her name is known, it is not mentioned. (They call her "this woman...this sorcerer.") If the leader knows why she is here, he does not say.

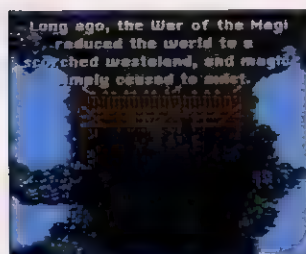


They do not fear her. In fact they seem barely to acknowledge her. But they should.

She is under control now. (The Slave Crown on her head keeps her the creature of her masters.) But gossip says she burned down 50 Magitek-equipped warriors in three minutes. She has magic in her, and magic has a deadly history in this world.

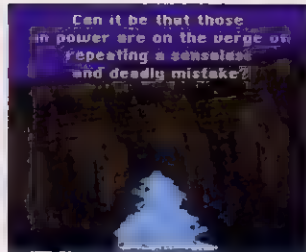


It's time. The troopers and the woman head off into the misty west. It has started to snow again, and dim lights begin to appear ahead. Soon they'll be at Narshe's gates. And what then?



So long since magic touched this earth, and so happily has it been forgotten. A thousand years ago, the War of the Magi — a war fought with the Espers' power — left the planet a smoking ruin. When it was over, magic was gone, just gone, along with most of its practitioners.

The world has come back from the abyss. It has been a long time in coming, but technology slowly cast its spell once again, and a millennium after the planet was taken for dead, it is flourishing.



Yet the temptation to restore that vast, lost power has proved too great for some to resist, and magic is making a comeback. Dark forces have been set in motion. And, once again, the world is very close to the brink.

About the Game

At its heart, Final Fantasy III is about what happens when the hunger for power gets out of control. The ones doing the hungering are the Emperor Gestahl and his right-hand man, Kefka, and the power is magic.

Not magic as in parlor tricks. Not rabbit-out-of-a-hat type stuff. This magic is a dangerous thing. A thousand years earlier, it almost destroyed the world.

The world came back, and, unfortunately for the world, magic is coming back, too.

In the first half of the game, you have to stop Gestahl and his lieutenant. To do so, you'll need to recruit people you'll find all across the world. And to find them, you'll use your controller to move through a huge surface world, its towns, castles, caves, encampments, and out-of-the-way places (even an Opera House).

There's Locke — a relic hunter who keeps getting mistaken for a common thief, and who's rather sensitive about it. There's Edgar, the young king of Figaro, who has a weakness for women, and his impetuous brother, Sabin, who has a weakness for barbells. Celes is a former imperial general who can't quite escape her past. Cyan, a noble warrior with over-elegant speech and a distaste for machines. Gau, a boy whose crackpot father left him in the wilds, and who has grown up wild. There's Relm, a child artist wise beyond her years, and her grandfather, Strago, who's still haunted by a monster from his youth.

There's Shadow, always on the fringe of the party, but with a better heart than he would ever confess to having.

And there is Terra. First among all the characters, there is Terra. When we meet her at the very beginning of the game, her name is just a row of question marks. She's a woman with a secret even she doesn't know, and I'm not going to spoil it here.

They're a good bunch of people in a real story, full of twists and turns, and you can put your heart into them. Many of them have something in their past that's holding them back, and you'll have to help them come to grips with their inner demons. (In fact, sometimes you've got to pop right into their dreams and fight the demons yourself for experience points!)

If ever a game deserved the label of a "voyage of self-discovery," this is it.

While FF3 (which corresponds to FF6 in Japan) is a grand adventure, it's also a role-playing game, and basic RPG rules apply. Your object is to cover the globe and improve the party's abilities to a point where the good guys can finally confront the treacherous emperor and his evil lieutenant. This leads up to a magical equivalent of a nuclear holocaust.

And then the story's just half-told. In the second half of the game, the scattered party is slowly reconstituted and the quest is taken up again. But the world has been remade; you'll have to re-learn some of its rules and figure out new ones. And now the target is Kefka, who survived the apocalypse and is playing god atop a tower in the south.

This is all achieved by fighting to gain experience — represented in points awarded for defeating creatures in combat.

When a character accumulates enough of these experience points, his or her level rises. That means greater endurance (reflected in Hit Points, or HP), a deeper reservoir of Magic Points (MP), and improvements in the basic "stats" that define a particular character's strengths and weaknesses. (Only in RPGs does fighting make you a better person.)

Along the way, in chests, in shops, and in mysterious, dark places under the earth, the party finds items that make those stats heftier, combat safer, and life generally easier.

Some are Relics, which endow party members with superhuman gifts. And some are Magicite shards — the remains of magical Espers — which allow you to learn spells and harness the Espers' powers in combat.

You should talk to everyone, for you never know who holds the tip that will set you off on a new and unexpected adventure. In fact, you should make a point of talking to everyone every time you meet them — especially if a significant event has occurred in the game since your last chat. See, they're in this world with you, experiencing the changes you've wrought, and consequently will say different things at different times.

Take your time. Do not rush. There's no need, and a rushed game won't be nearly as much fun. FF3 is far too large to be completed in a sitting or two, and death is always lurking close by, so you'll need to save your game frequently. That means telling the game to take a snapshot of your position so you can pick up where you left off.

However, don't be timid about exploring. This will seem like an enormous world to even the most casual player, but a lot of surprises and side roads have been squirreled away inside, and you never know when you're going to find something utterly unexpected.

Finally, if possible, hook your machine up to stereo speakers and a nice big TV. The music is superb, and the graphics shine whether you're looking at something as simple as a section of wall, or whipping across the landscape in Super NES's special "Mode 7."

FINAL FANTASY III

PART I UP AND RUNNING



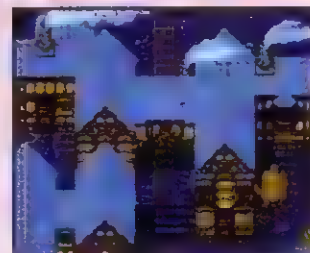
Narshe

You begin the game fighting for the wrong side: The Empire. Sorry, but there's nothing to be done about it. Let's just ride it out for now and see where it takes us.

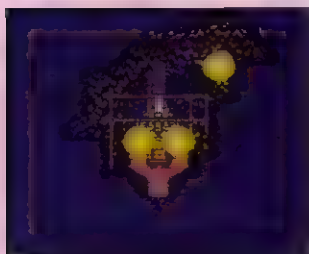
Actually, it takes us straight to the industrial town of Narshe. Ah, technology! Gears turning, belts running, steam gushing, this little community is testimony to the real magic of science. Take a moment to enjoy all the little machines at work.

However, for all the activity, there's not much exploring to be done here. These guys in their bulky Magitek armor can't fit all the way down the side streets, so once you've lingered over the sights, march straight up the main drag with Terra in the lead. (Hey, the soldiers may be officers, but they're not gentlemen.)

The party isn't welcome in Narshe, and you can expect a fight. The guards and lobos that Narshe sends to stop you are small fry, and since the imperial troopers are only temporary companions, use their Magitek weaponry for all it's worth.



The Mines



Bear north up a street of steaming pipes to the mine shaft. The area is better defended than the town itself, but creatures here can't compete with your weapons, either.

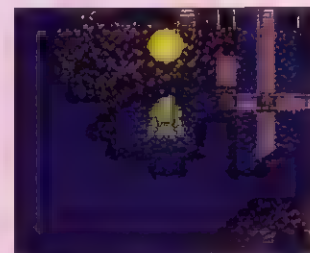
Put in at the alcove just north and to the left of the entrance. The glimmering blue star within is a "save point." While FF3 allows you to save anywhere on the world map, indoors you should keep an eye out for these pit stops. You can use a Sleeping Bag (which restores a character's HP and MP) or Tent (which restores the party's points) here. You should also

save the game so you won't have to trek all the way through a dungeon again should the party come to a bad end within.

The presence of a save point is also usually a sign that you've got a big fight coming up. That's the case here.

Head north, again, to a gate. The trooper Vicks knocks this down without any help, and inside, the Narshe guards sic the Whelk on you. The first boss of FF3 is a large, horny-shelled snail that can take a lot punishment. The Whelk can also dish it out when hit in the wrong places.

Carefully read Vicks' account of the mission briefing; it holds the key to the battle. Attack the Whelk's head, not its shell. The Whelk rechannels the energy devoted to attacks on the shell back into Mega Volt electrical storms that can lay waste to a weakened party all at once.





What Vicks doesn't say is that the monster will occasionally retreat entirely into its shell — the giveaway is a "Gruu. . ." sound — and that can lead to some bad moments. If you have ordered an attack against the head, but the head hides before the attack can be launched, the attack will be carried out against the shell instead and you can expect to get hit back, and hard.

The trick is to launch your attacks quickly the moment the head reappears. Each member should be able to get in his or her licks once using Fire Beam. Wait until the head reappears — to the accompaniment of another "Gruu. . ." sound — before attacking again. About seven attacks should turn the Whelk into seafood.

OK, we're minus one bottom-dweller. Head for the stairs to the north, and there's the Esper on ice. Shouldn't there be some cocktail sauce with this?

But wait: it's not behaving like the sort of stuff that you usually find in freezers. It's giving off an odd, pulsing blue light, and suddenly Wedge, and then Vicks, aren't there anymore. Blue lightning arcs between the Esper and the young woman. Then there are explosions. And finally, there's a great glaring whiteness.

Back in Narshe

The woman wakes up back in Narshe, in the comfy back bedroom of an old man's home, minus her memory and the slave crown used by Vicks and Wedge to keep her under control. The memory comes back quickly, though. Terra, that's her name. And Terra has. . .

. . . oops, run out of time. We interrupt this program for an important bulletin: The Empire's tracking dogs have found you. The troops are at the front door, demanding Terra's return, along with the Magitek armor. (Otherwise, it comes out of their paychecks, one supposes.) The old man hustles her out a back door with instructions to make her way out through the mines. (Before Terra scoots, collect the Elixir from the clock in the front room. Virtually every clock in the game conceals one of these handy drinks.)

Terra is a mysterious, magic-throwing young woman we meet while she's in the employ of the Empire. Later, she'll join the Resistance cause. But who is she, and where does her magic come from?





You can make a name for characters you discover, but we'll stick to the "official" names in the story.

The back door leads out onto one of the catwalks you saw earlier. Follow it west until you reach the mine entrance in the cliff. (You'll be spotted by troops as you cross the street. Just keep going.) As in the earlier segment, the mine isn't too elaborate. There's just one main path to follow, though you'll want to pop into the occasional side rooms to collect the healing supplies from chests.

Unfortunately, that one path is a dead-end. As Terra approaches the exit, she's surrounded by troops and backed into a corner. The floor gives way and leaves her, unconscious, on a lower level. And it's here, in a dream, that her memory really begins to flood back. Kefka, with his strange laugh. . . the death of a soldier at her magic-throwing hands. . . Emperor Gestahl, and his conspiracy to revive magic.

Then blackness.

Terra needs help, and help is on the way. Back in Narshe, the old man has another visitor — a defensive but good-hearted relic-hunter named Locke. At first, he's not much inclined to get involved — Terra's got a bad rap as an "imperial witch" — but the old man explains that imperial troops are chasing her and that Narshe can't stand alone. Narshe is going to have to join up with an underground resistance known as the Returners. He sends Locke out with instructions to find Terra, and to then head south to Figaro to meet with the King.

Locke arrives just as a company of troopers appears south of Terra's location. That sounds a bit grim, but things could be worse. For one thing, a gang of little Moogles turns up out of nowhere and signs on to help Locke. And for another, there's a little maze between the fallen Terra and the troops. That buys you some time.

In this little game within the game, the party must bump off the troop leader at the south end of the maze before his men reach Terra at the north end. It's not very difficult, and there are a number of ways to do it. You're given control over three separate parties of Moogles — one of them accompanied by Locke. Use one party to drive a hole through the imperial troops. Use Locke's party to take advantage of the hole and do the actual fighting with the "marshal". Keep the third party back to block the final tunnel to Terra in case the troops break through. The marshal's no butterball, either, so call on the Moogles' "Dance" talents to put him down hard.

Locke is Terra's rescuer. He consider himself a treasure hunter, but people keep calling him a thief. (You wouldn't like it, either.)
Specialty: Steal/Capture.



Once you've succeeded, you'll be on autopilot for a bit as Locke carries Terra off to the mine exit and she finally comes around. Locke valiantly offers his services until Terra recovers her memory, and he drops a hint: Remember this secret mine entrance. You'll need it soon enough.

And that leaves us at the entrance to Narshe. The town itself is off-limits for now. (Passing the gate immediately excites the interest of imperial troops still on the hunt.) But do spend the time to visit the school on the outskirts for an education on the basic ins and outs of FF3. It's not just good advice; it's fun.

Talk to everyone, and be sure to make use of the save point behind the first door and the water in the foyer to restore your Hit and Magic Points. You'd also do well to search pots and chests for useful items.

But also be prepared for the unexpected: One of them is a monster-in-a-box. (It's like a jack-in-the-box with Hit Points and a bad attitude.)

Figaro, Figaro, Figaro!

Leaving Narshe brings you to the world map for the first time. You're at the northern end of a long north-south valley, so there's just one way to go. Follow the line of the mountains to the west and head south until you reach a desert. Then head west just until you clear the northern "hump," then go straight south. You should quickly see a

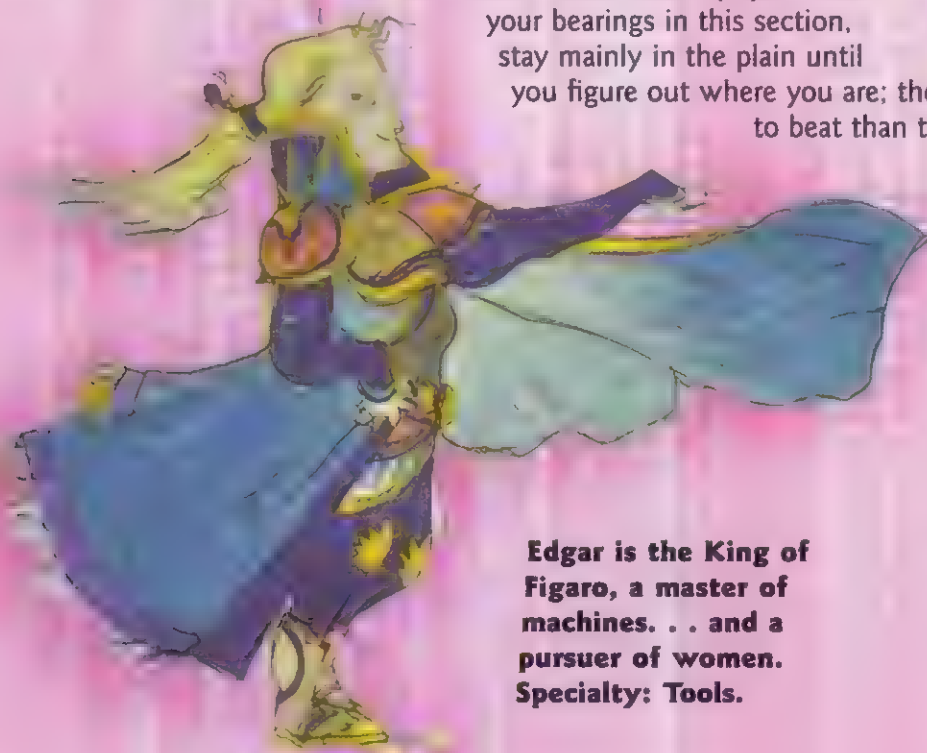
castle dead ahead. (If you lose your bearings in this section, stay mainly in the plain until

you figure out where you are; the enemies there are easier to beat than the desert creatures.)



Just enter the main door and head straight through the palace to the throne room. You're free to explore a bit on your way in, but there will be plenty of time for that later, and it's impolite to keep a sovereign waiting.

Edgar is the King of Figaro, a master of machines. . . and a pursuer of women. Specialty: Tools.





Well, Edgar has the title, all right, but right now he's not acting very kingly: He's checking Terra out. (The King's a serious flirt.) Then he turns his back on her. Then he starts going on about her beauty. Yikes. Maybe King Edgar should get out more often.



Tools Chart

Edgar's a machine man, so he's naturally good with Tools. And that's why the shop in Figaro Castle is the main source for these items. (However, two of the best are well-hidden away in the recesses of the game.)

Tool	Effect	Location
AutoCrossbow	Strikes multiple enemies	Shop in Figaro Castle
NoiseBlaster	Confuses multiple enemies	Shop in Figaro Castle
Bio Blaster	Gasses multiple enemies	Shop in Figaro Castle
Drill	Penetrates enemy's defense	Shop in Figaro Castle
Flash	Blinds multiple enemies	Shop in Figaro Castle
Debilitator	Casts weak point randomly	Shop in Figaro Castle
Chain Saw	Randomly dispatches an enemy	In secret room of clock building in Zozo
Air Anchor	Enemy becomes self-destructive	Cult of Kefka's tower

At any rate, he and Locke eventually leave Terra alone, and she's free to do some checking out herself. The two doors in the room just before the throne room lead up to a chest and a view at the top of the tower. And while you probably missed them on the way in, the hard-to-see doors in the southern half of this room open into two shops.

Locke's already the proud owner of an AutoCrossbow — which will be in use virtually the whole game — but be sure to collect a NoiseBlaster and a Bio Blaster at the eastern shop and to see what you need might need in the way of healing supplies at the western one. You probably haven't run across Echo Screen, Tent, or Tincture yet.

Tincture, the drink of wizards, is especially valuable because it allows you to restore 50 MP at any point. Be sure to check those "free sample" chests in the back, too.

Heading south again, you're back in the open air. If you bear west, through the door, you'll find a room where you can take a nap to recover any lost Hit and Magic Points (and learn a bit more about Edgar's woman-chasing). You'll also find a down staircase that leads back out to the sand and the castle's western wing.



Have a chat with the matron, who'll bring you up to speed on Edgar's missing brother, Sabin. After his father's death, he fled the palace in distaste over the succession process. (For a laugh, talk to the hyperactive little girl who's running around the room.)

At the rear of the room, take the up staircase to the roof and chat with the guard there. Edgar's been going on about his alliance with the Empire, but this soldier reports imperial aggression on the southern continent and says it can't be long before the fighting comes north.

While you're touring the grounds, you might as well stop in at the east wing (most easily reached from the west by detouring behind the castle). It's pretty much empty (this will be your room), but chat with the rooftop guard. He'll mention South Figaro. If you took a more eastern route to Figaro, and checked out the tunnel entrance in the eastern mountains, chances are you've heard that name before. It's your next stop.

Head back into the castle again, via the door closest to the east wing, and you'll arrive in an oddly familiar room.

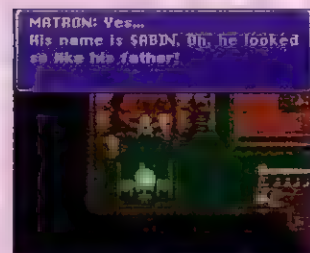
It's the library where the matron's anecdote about Edgar and Sabin was played out. (But do take a moment to chat with the two librarians; they'll fill you in with a touch more info on magic.)

Just for fun, pop into the foyer and down the right-hand stairs to visit the dungeon, where you can hear the imprisoned thieves gripe about their condition. The left-hand stairs ultimately lead down to the castle's engine room. That's off-limits until the second half of the game, but if you go down one flight, you'll receive a tantalizing hint from

the attendant: "We're ready to leave at a moment's notice."

And now you've seen pretty much what there is to see. Edgar's back in the throne room again, but no sooner do you speak to him than word comes of a visitor: Kefka.

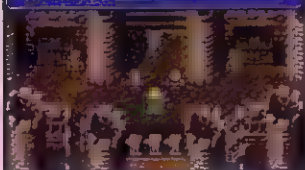
Remember Terra's dream in the mines? Same guy. He's already ticked off about having to trek out to Edgar's castle (not to mention the sand in his



Kefka is Gestahl's right-hand man and the main bad guy in FF3. This monster is evil and crazy. (But at least he has a sense of humor.)



EDGAR: Hmm...this wouldn't have anything to do with this "cutie" everyone's been whispering about, would it?



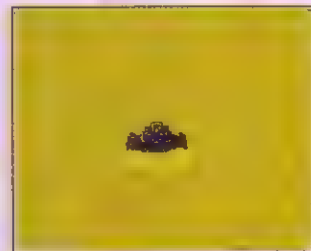
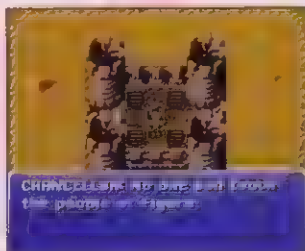
boots), and Edgar's not going to make him happier with evasive answers about Terra's whereabouts.

The King heads off to the meet with his chancellor — they know trouble is coming — and Locke takes Terra to her room in the east wing. This gives him another opportunity to act defensive about being called a thief ("That's treasure-hunter!"), as well as a chance to reveal Edgar's true allegiance to the Returners, his own role as liaison between the king and the resistance, and the role of the old man in Narshe. Ties things up neatly, yes?

Not quite. Terra's still confused. On one hand, she's an imperial officer. On the other, she was being manipulated by her employer. And on the other — hey, that's three hands! — she still doesn't know who she is. And she's going to have to make a decision anyway.

Right now, though, she's going to make another escape. Edgar wakes in the night to find the castle in flames and guards running around like madmen. It's Kefka's work, naturally, but the king's not caught totally off-balance. Castle Figaro draws in its wings and vanishes into the sand — so that's what the engine room is for! — and Edgar, Locke, and Terra take off on Chocobo-back for South Figaro. Imperial troops are in hot pursuit. (More on Chocobos a bit later.)

The troops catch up to the party quickly. There's no way to avoid it. You might be worried that being on the receiving end of Magitek weapons won't be such a nice thing.



But the battle that follows is almost comic relief if Terra calls on her magic. Whether she does so now or later, it will draw the same awestruck reaction. Edgar and Locke know a good thing when they see it, and they offer to introduce her to Returner leader Banon. Perhaps she can at once help the resistance and understand her own power.

Spells Chart

Here's a comprehensive list of the spells in FF3, from the piddling Osmose to the powerful Ultima and Quick. They're listed by name (using the in-game abbreviations), cost in Magic Points (MP) and effect.

Spell	Cost in MP	Effect
Antdot	3	Cures poisoning
Bio	26	Poison-elemental attack
Bolt	6	Lightning-elemental attack
Bolt 2	22	Lightning-elemental attack
Bolt 3	53	Lightning-elemental attack
Break	25	Turns an enemy to stone



Bserk	16	Casts Berserk on target
Cure	5	Recovers HP
Cure 2	25	Recovers HP
Cure 3	40	Recovers HP
Demi	33	Cuts an enemy's HP in half
Dispel	25	Maintains poor status
Doom	35	Dispatches an enemy
Drain	15	Drains HP from an enemy
Fire	4	Fire-elemental attack
Fire 2	20	Fire-elemental attack
Fire 3	51	Fire-elemental attack
Flare	45	Barrier-piercing attack
Float	17	Makes target float
Haste	10	Raises battle speed
Haste 2	38	Speeds up entire party
Ice	5	Ice-elemental attack
Ice 2	21	Ice-elemental attack
Ice 3	52	Ice-elemental attack
Imp	10	Changes enemy or character to an Imp, or back to normal state
Life	30	Recovers life
Life 2	60	Restores life and HP/MP
Life 3	50	Protects from mortal wound
Merton	85	Unfocused piercing fire attack
Meteor	62	Damages multiple enemies
Muddle	8	Confuses target
Mute	8	Silences target
Osmose	1	Absorbs MP from an enemy
Pearl	40	Pearl elemental attack
Poison	3	Poisons an enemy
Quake	50	Unfocused Earth-elemental attack
Quartr	48	Cuts an enemy's HP by three-quarters
Quick	99	Allows double commands
Rasp	12	Damages MP
Rflect	22	Casts a magic barrier on target
Regen	10	Gradually recovers HP
Remedy	15	Cures status ailments



Safe	12	Raises defense
Scan	3	Displays an enemy's HP/weak point
Shell	15	Raises magic defense
Sleep	5	Puts target to sleep
Slow	5	Slows battle speed
Slow 2.	26	Slows multiple enemies
Stop	10	Stops an enemy
Ultima.	80	Damages multiple enemies
Vanish	18	Renders target invisible
Warp.	20	Allows escape from dungeons/battles
W Wind	75	Unfocused near-fatal attack
Xzone	53	Sends an enemy into the X-Zone

Off to South Figaro

Edgar says to head south, but you'll want to bear closer to the east to find the tunnel entrance that leads to South Figaro. If you dropped by earlier, you found it closed for renovations. But Edgar's the King, and the guard's not going to quarrel with the King.

The tunnel's rather like the Narshe mines — small, but with lots of curving passages, more side trips to chests (lots of valuable Tincture to restore spell points), and tougher enemies with some spell-casting ability. So make your first stop at the recovery spring directly opposite the tunnel entrance to beef up your HP. (You won't be able to reach the tunnel entrance across the pool for quite some time.)

Once you clear the tunnel, head southeast and you'll quickly come upon the town of South Figaro. This is a nice way-point, and we've got some exploring to do.

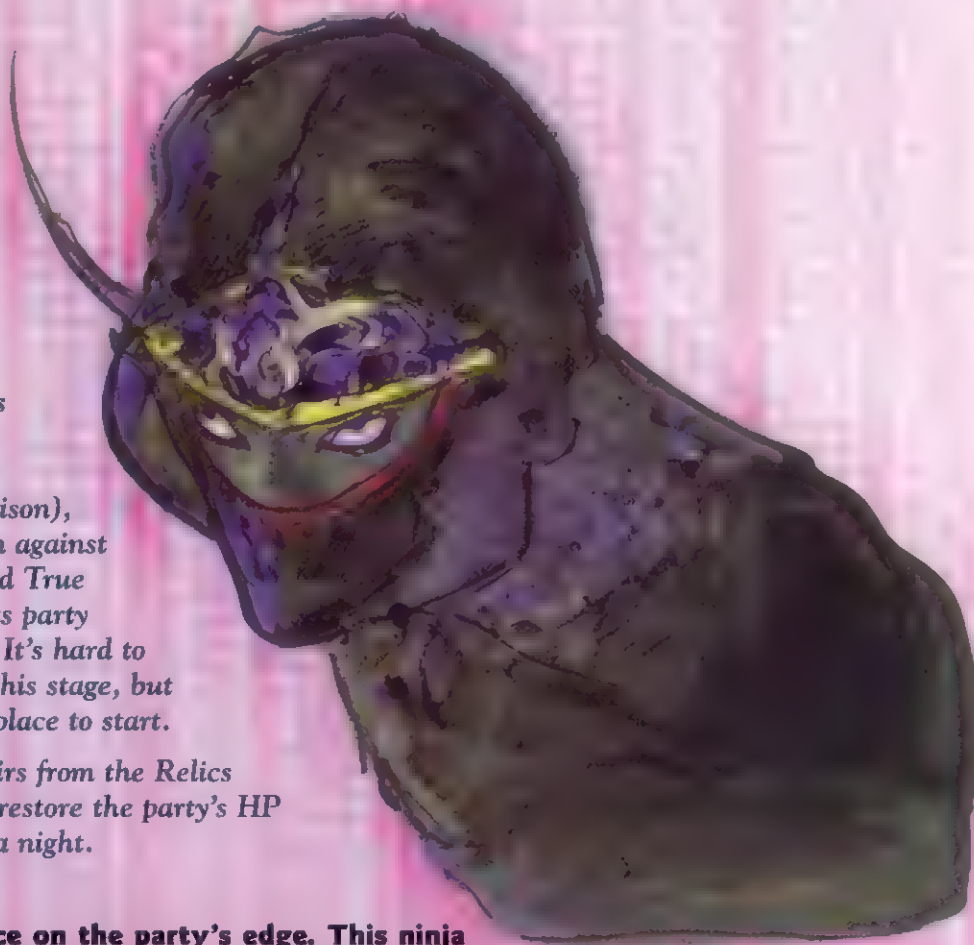
South Figaro

This thriving village isn't nearly so high-tech as Narshe, and with imperial troops still cleaning sand out of their underwear, you have the freedom to explore. Take your time here, and enjoy the more casual pace. There's no need to do things in any particular order, so here's a little tourist guide of sights to check out. Start by visiting the shops, and then search the nooks and crannies at the corners and ends of streets. This densely packed town has a lot of them, and many contain little health-giving "freebies." One of the more notable is the Warp Stone you'll find at the far western end of the town wall.



Things to do in South Figaro:

- 1) The Arsenal is in the north-central part of town. Buy Heavy Shields and Plumed Hats for all three party members, Regal Cutlasses for Edgar and Terra, a Kung Fu Suit for Locke, and a Cotton Robe for Terra. That'll bring everyone up to date. Sell off any outdated gear.
- 2) The Item Shop is at the southeastern tip of the town wall. (It can also be reached by stairs from the street.) You probably already have much of what it has to offer, but Eyedrop — used to cure Dark status — is a new one.
- 3) The Chocobo rental shop is opposite the town entrance. It's 80 GP per ride on these yellow, ostrich-like birds. Note the location and talk to the bird (screech), but don't rent one quite yet. (After all, you don't know where you're going.)
- 4) The Relics Shop is just southeast of the Chocobo outlet. Now, this is where things really get interesting! These special items, when equipped, give party members superhuman gifts. The South Figaro shop stocks Sprint Shoes (speed), Goggles (protection against Dark), Star Pendant (protection against Poison), Jewel Ring (protection against Dark and Petrify), and True Knight (which protects party members low in HP). It's hard to know what to buy at this stage, but True Knight's a good place to start.
- 5) The Inn is just upstairs from the Relics Shop. A warm bed to restore the party's HP and MP runs 80 GP a night.



Shadow is a dark presence on the party's edge. This ninja will go his own way when it suits him. But he's really not such a bad sort, and may save your life when no one else can. He's got a dog named Interceptor. Specialty: Throw.



Relics are us!

Relics don't just prevent status ailments like Dark, Poison and Imp. Equipping the appropriate one will also cure any current ailments without drawing on your inventory. (Equipping Ribbon, for instance, will clear up everything.) They're handy if you're short on supplies.

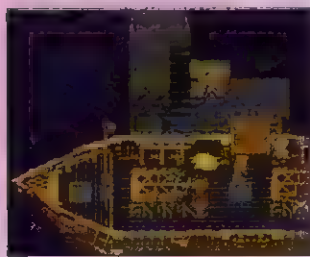
- 6) The Cafe is through the south exit from the Inn. You never know what you'll hear in a cafe. Chat with everyone here; aside from the usual worry about war, you hear some gossip about martial-arts expert Duncan and the shadowy character alone at the bar. Well, not alone; Shadow has his dog with him, and if he can be believed, the dog eats strangers.

That's a loose end, and it will remain so for the time being. So is the Crankiest Man in Town — a pet name for the unfriendly guy you meet in the northern cellar room. He's ferrying cider to a house in the southeast corner of town — the one whose owner will talk to you only if you bring him cider — and it will always be inconvenient for the Crankiest to talk to you, at either end of his journey. (You can beat him to the door by using a hidden bridge across the central channel just northeast of the cafe entrance, but he'll still beat you to the cider lover indoors.) Let all this settle in, but don't go nuts trying to solve it yet.

Sometimes those nooks and crannies are indoors, too. Drop by the huge house in the northwest corner of town. Not much to do on the ground floor. But behind the first door on the north side of the upstairs hallway, you'll find a rude man writing a treacherous letter and a maid who claims the room is always drafty. That's always a dead giveaway of a secret passage, and sure enough, there's one behind the bookcase in the west wall. Simply walk through the wall, follow the stairs down to a bookshelf-lined corridor, and bear east. The first room off the hall is vacant, but the second has a save point, and the third is a storage room with 500 GP in the chest at the west end, another 1,000 GP in a chest near the middle, and 1,500 GP in a chest at the east end.

And we're not even done: The secret passage has a secret passage. After coming down the stairs, don't bear east. Try walking straight south into the wall and then moving right. You'll find yourself in a kind of dungeon, with Hyper Wrist and Running Shoes relics in chests in the two cells.

Back upstairs, take the right-hand exit. When you're done admiring the neat waterwheel in the town's central channel, walk north to the town wall and head west and then south.



That's right: There's a hidden alley behind the house, and it leads right into another storage room. Check the clock against the back wall for an Elixir, and then walk through the wall at the south end of the room for a surprise.

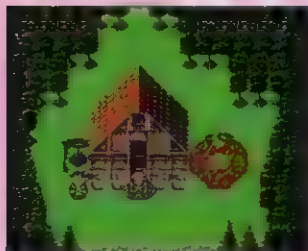
Y'know the secret passages in the Clue board game that take you diagonally all the way across the board? Well, the architects of South Figaro must have played Clue, because the one-way secret passage that begins here winds up in a cellar in the southeast part of town. Right now, it's just a cool thing to try out, but remember it. You'll need it.

Pay a visit to the ship docked at the pier at the southern end of town. It's not going anywhere, but it's gorgeously rendered, with all sorts of little details. You can see every rigging line, and even the canned food and tomatoes stacked on the dock.



Talk to the people. Ah, I know, that's always the advice given for an RPG, and most of the residents are a bit scared by the prospect of the approaching war with the Empire. But a few are more helpful than others. Duncan's wife, for instance, will tell you that he's off in the mountains with his disciples. Perhaps it's time to take a Chocobo ride. . .

The Chocobo is easy to drive, and it spares you the need to fight your way through all the random encounters in the countryside. Just watch it with the B button or you'll do an involuntary dismount and strand yourself in the middle of nowhere. (Whoops.)



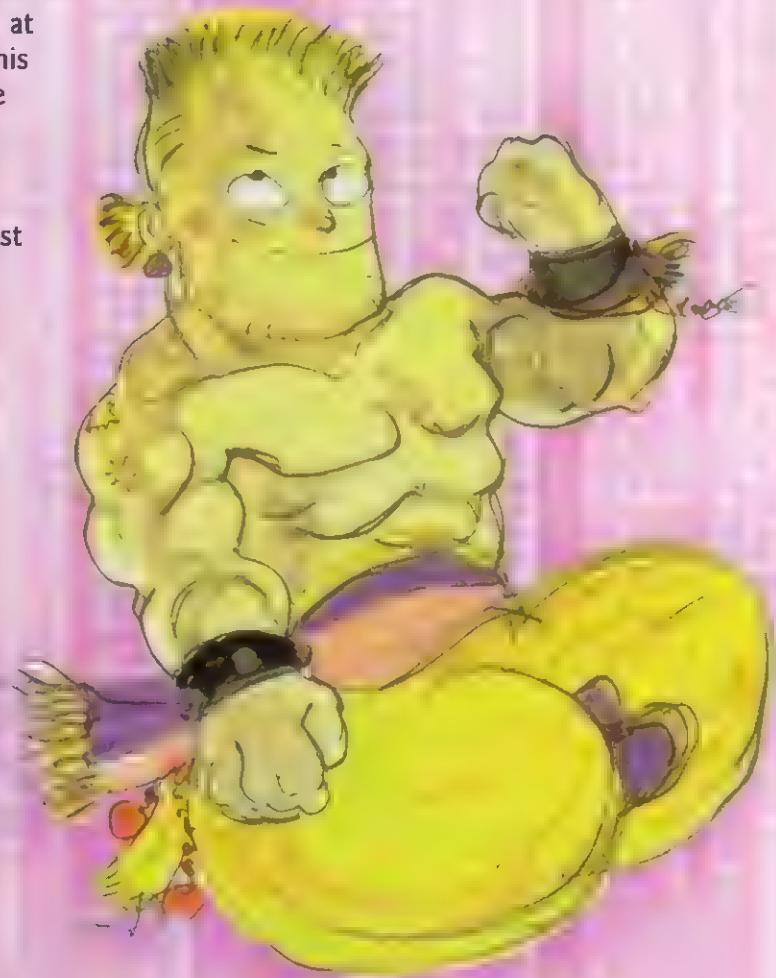
Head straight north, and you'll come upon a simple house in a forest clearing backed up against the mountains. No one's home, but, oh, the contents: flowers, tea, dishes — all Sabin's favorites. It looks as though Edgar's found his brother's trail.

That's not all he's found, either. When the party steps back outside, you'll see a man just left of the door. He reveals that Sabin headed into the mountains after the death of the martial-arts master Duncan, and that Duncan's son, Vargas, is also missing.

There's but one other place you can go at this stage: Mt. Kolts, where Duncan and his party were bound. You'll find the entrance at the northern end of the easternmost valley north of South Figaro. While still basically a central path, with little off-shoots leading to chests, it's the biggest maze we've encountered yet, and the enemies are the nastiest; spend a night at the inn in South Figaro before you set out, and ride a Chocobo to the mountain to spare combat damage en route. Be sure you've got a good supply of healers to keep the party's strength up and Tinctures to refill Terra's MP.

You won't have gone very far before you see a dark figure on the edge of the screen, staying just ahead of you on the path. This is Duncan's

**Sabin, Edgar's brother, fled into solitude after his father's death and seems to have spent a lot of his time pumping iron. . .
Specialty: Blitz.**





resentful son, Vargas, whom you should have heard about back at the cafe. He reportedly killed his father in revenge for an imagined slight, and if you don't mind your Ps and Qs, he'll soon come after you.

Vargas is the closest thing we've had to a serious "boss" so far in the game. Spare no expense: Hit him with everything you've got, and take care to protect Terra because you may need her to boost your HP with magic.

Fortunately, in the late going, you'll get some help from an unexpected quarter: Sabin, looking like a bodybuilder and wielding a Blitz technique called Pummel. Read carefully how he pulls it off.

Blitz will be a talent you'll need to call on many times. Don't let the door hit your butt on the way out, Vargas.

Blitz gives you access to a range of special fighting maneuvers. They're performed by punching in combinations of direction-pad and button presses.

The Blitz techniques are easy to use but may confuse you a bit at first. You may imagine that they don't seem to work, or appear to work only inconsistently. Not so! Practice!

Save your game as soon as possible after you learn a new Blitz, and rehearse it until you're happy. Few problems are more irritating than an "Incorrect Blitz input!" message during a critical battle.

When using the button-based techniques, punch in the combination as quickly as possible. If you're too slow off the mark, it won't work.

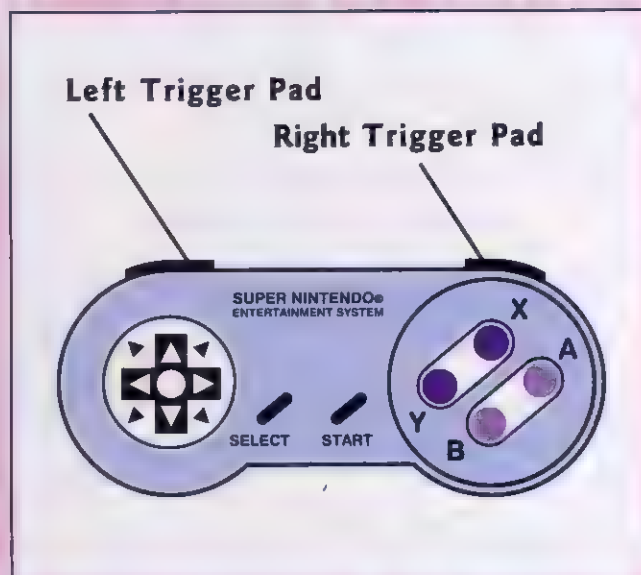
When plugging in the combinations for AuraBolt, Fire Dance, Air Blade and Bum Rush, use your thumb to roll the direction pad smoothly through the maneuvers. They're in sequence; don't try to punch in each direction separately.

And, yes, this is worth the trouble, so don't focus on the simple moves at the expense of the longer ones. Basic attacks like Pummel and Suplex are nice, but the more advanced Blitzes will nail shut your enemy's coffin.

Sabin's Blitz Effects

The following chart lists all eight Blitz effects that Sabin can learn in FF3, the correct sequence of direction-pad and button presses used to execute them, and their effects.

References to directions (left, right, up and down) refer to the arrow keys. R and L refer to the right and left trigger pads on top of the controller. X and Y, of course, refer to the X and Y buttons.





Name	Sequence	Effect
Pummel	Left, right, left.	Penetrates enemy defenses.
AuraBolt	Quarter circle on the direction pad, moving clockwise, beginning with down and ending with left.	Mystical purity attack
Suplex	X, Y, down, up	Gets drop on enemy
Fire Dance	Half circle on the direction pad, moving counter-clockwise, beginning with left and ending with right.	Fire attack
Mantra	R, L, R, L, X, Y	Refreshes rest of party
Air Blade	Three-quarter circle on direction pad, moving clockwise, beginning with up and ending with left.	Wind attack
Spiraler	R, L, X, Y, right, left	Recovers party at Sabin's expense
Bum Rush.	Full circle on direction pad, moving clockwise and beginning and ending with left.	Strikes mortal blow

Returners' Hideout

Once the battle's over, you'll find the party on the north side of the mountain. Just head north up this enclosed valley until you see a tunnel entrance to the east. This is the Returners' hideaway — not big on camouflage, are they? — and another pleasant respite from the rugged outside world.

It's decision time for our heroine, so you'll control only Terra when she wakes up. You can do a little shopping. (A relic, Sprint Shoes, is available at the store.) Check out those chests and pots for useful items. (Green Cherry, the anti-Imp formula, can be found in a pot in the room that contains the shop.)

And talk to everyone again. You'll learn more about Locke in particular. The one person you won't find around is Banon, the Returners' leader. If you've talked to everyone, a check with the entryway guard will reveal he's stepped outside. (It sounds as though the Returners have a smoke-free hideaway.)

Follow him out. Banon will ask if you've reached a decision. Tell him "yes," and Banon will give you the Gauntlet relic. After that, the story will proceed apace. The party and the Returners will meet to debate what the Empire is up to with magic and Espers, only to be interrupted by a report that South



Banon is the leader of the Returners — a resistance movement battling the Empire. He must be protected at all costs.

Figaro has fallen to the Empire and that troops are approaching. Time to leave.

Try this variant: Save your game at the save point inside the hideaway and tell Banon “no” three times running. He’ll respond differently each time, and then the story will proceed. . . but somewhat differently. Now the meeting doesn’t occur, and you’ll get a different relic (the Genji Glove) from a soldier.



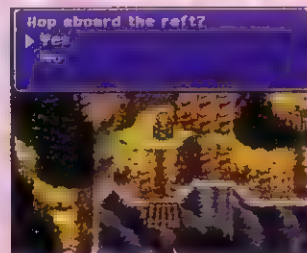
Up the Lete

Here the party splits up. Locke’s assigned to sneak into South Figaro and slow the Empire down. (Catch the dig he takes at Edgar before he leaves.) The rest are taking a raft leading up the Lete to visit the Esper.

The scenery here is gorgeous, what with the flowing water and the wooded bluffs. But don’t let that distract you — it’s also a treacherous

passage, and your duty here is to protect Banon. If he falls in battle, it’s time to restore. The best way to accomplish this is to use Banon as the party’s full-time nurse — using his “Health” command whenever the party’s looking a bit mopey in the HP department.

The rapids are a small maze: make the wrong turn, and you’ll find yourself going in circles. However, a left at the first junction will lead you to a rocky tunnel and a save point, and a left at the second junction to will lead to another tunnel and save point.



Running in Circles for Profit (But Not Necessarily Fun)

FF3 doesn’t have any back doors, but it does have a great way to raise levels quickly on the Lete if you own a joypad with a turbo control: Take the party around a perpetual circle at the river’s loop, with Banon healing and the others fighting. Just let the machine run. In a couple days, the party will be at Level 80. (Then again, playing FF3 as a God might ruin your fun.)

Sounds easy, but down a waterfall and around a bend comes a real challenge: an octopus known as Ultros. He's got Kefka's strange laugh and makes lots of bad jokes along the way, but between Sabin's Pummel, Terra's magic, and Banon's powers of restoration, the joke's on him. After a while, he'll give up. (Patience, however: Ultros has more than 2,000 HP.)

Patience isn't for Sabin. He dives in to give Ultros another Blitzing — he's a bit over-zealous, this one — and becomes separated from the others at a branch in the stream when the raft moves on. So just when the party most needs its strength, it is divided not just in two, but three.

Locke

Let's try our Locke in South Figaro. (Groan.) As we reach him, he's done a pretty good job of throwing a wrench into the imperial machinery, but he's on the run from troops and needs to find a way out.

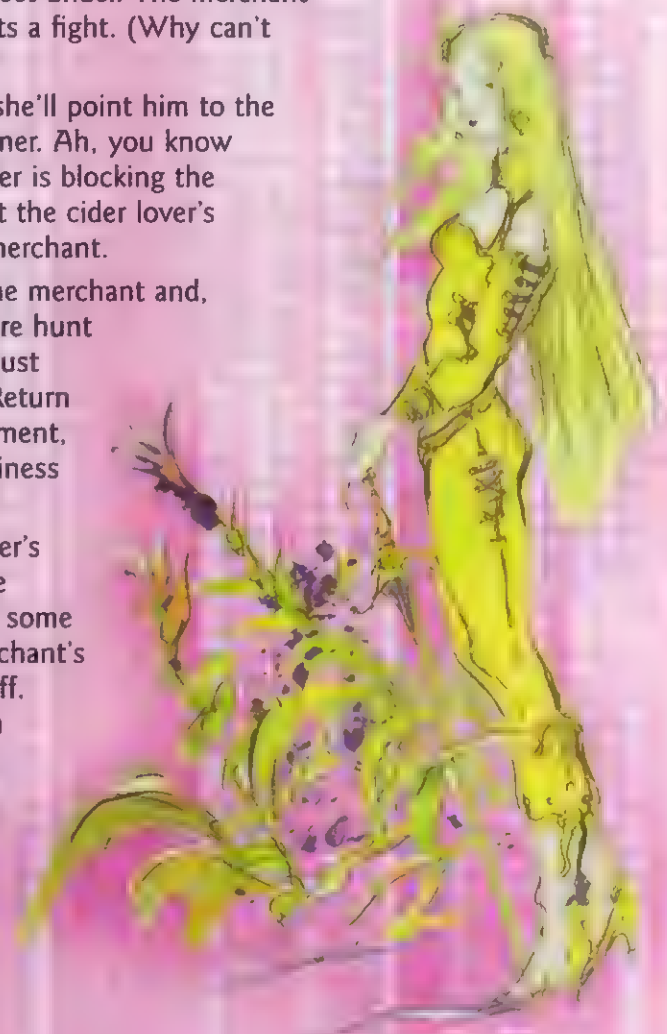
His world has suddenly grown very small. The smaller soldiers block his path and call him names, and the big one wants to plant him six feet under. The merchant at the item shop calls him a thief, which always starts a fight. (Why can't people get it straight? Locke's a Treasure Hunter.)

However, he can chat with Duncan's widow, and she'll point him to the tunnel in the huge house at the city's northwest corner. Ah, you know that one already! But a large, Magitek-equipped soldier is blocking the way northwest. And a kid blocking the cellar stairs at the cider lover's house won't let anyone by who doesn't look like a merchant.

Are you thinking what I'm thinking? Go back to the merchant and, instead of hitting him, steal — er, I mean, uh, treasure hunt — his clothes. (If you get a "Can't steal!" message, just keep trying.) Now you look just like him. (Try this: Return later, after the merchant recovers from his embarrassment, and he'll take you for another merchant and talk business with you.)

That should let you into the cellar of the cider lover's house and, via the northern door, into the rest of the town. A bit of cautious exploration will pay off with some useful advice. Don't bother the soldiers while in merchant's clothing; they all think you're trying to sell them stuff. (You'll get respect if you're wearing an officer's green uniform, though, and at least a couple of officers are wandering around town. . .)

Celes is a former imperial general who sympathizes with the resistance. She has some trouble living down her less-than-honorable past. Specialty: Rune.



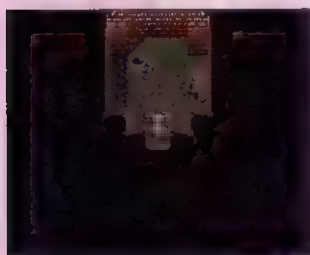


Make for the cafe cellar and the Crankiest Man in Town. He'll think you've come to steal his cider (people just have the wrong idea about Locke), and he'll start a fight. Steal his clothes — the cider comes with them automatically — and make your way back to the cider lover's house. Give him the goods, and he'll open up about the secret passage in the cellar. It's the one you tried out earlier, but so far, it's only been one-way.

Trouble is, Cider Man doesn't remember the password, and his grandson, guarding the cellar stairs, will kick Locke from here to eternity without the right answer: Courage. (Fortunately, it's multiple choice, and the wrong two only result in Locke being dumped just next door.)

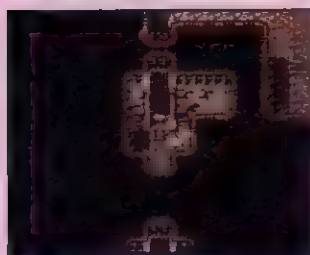
Into the tunnel with you, then. There are lots of surprises in store in the huge house at the other end. It's been turned into the imperial HQ. As the troops downstairs will happily confide, the owner is an imperial informer. (Remember the letter your party caught him writing on the last visit?)

And, if you make your way to the secret passage off the western room upstairs, you'll find it's been turned into a cell for a turncoat imperial general named Celes. She's being beaten. It's hard to watch, but do, as you'll learn something of Kefka's future plans. Locke will make like a monkey as one guard leaves. Enter then, free Celes from her chains — say hello to a new party member — and take the clock-key from the sleeping guard.



You can't go out the way you came in, so this key has to be your ticket out of here. Now, where have you seen a clock that needs winding? Try the far end of the big storage room at the end of the hall. Winding it will push back a bookshelf in the middle of the room, revealing a secret door. You're outta here!

Well, almost out. The door leads to another maze, this one leading out of town. It's a tricky place, with walk-through walls in place of doors, lots of fights with Commanders and Vector Pups, and an obscure entrance to its crypt-like second level.



To find it, head east through the first wall, bear south, and, while you're still in the dark area between walls, head west and then south. You'll find Ether and X-Potion in two visible chests, but there's gotta be something more or this place wouldn't be such a pain to get to, right?

Yup! In the southern end of this level's northeast section is a third chest, hidden from view by the wall. It contains Ribbon — a wonderful Relic that protects the user from all status hassles including Dark, Poison, and Mute.

There are a few goodies in this dungeon's side pockets, too, and if you're well-equipped, it may be worth the trouble to seek them out. If you just want to get out of town, though, head east from the entrance, south, and then east again.

That doesn't get us to Narshe, though. The Mt. Kolts route won't work anymore. (The Empire has reached this remote spot as well.) No one's home at Sabin's house (just in case you thought he'd headed back there after his fight with the octopus). It looks as though you'll leave as you arrived — via the tunnel to Figaro. Seems the monsters have gotten a whole lot nastier since the last time, though — especially the poisonous Trilobiters. But it's short trip, and if you've already plundered the chests, you won't need to explore.

Still, be sure to put in at the recovery spring nearby just before the exit, for there's a surprise at the



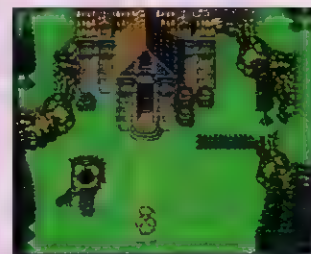
very end. As you move through the tunnels, you'll hear a loud, hollow grinding sound. It's not your teeth. It's not your father taking the playroom door off its hinges with an electric screwdriver. It's TunnelArmor — a sort of burrowing tank with strong magic and the party in its sights. Fortunately, Celes has just the antidote in her Runic Blade, which can absorb its attacks with no harm to the bearer.

That doesn't apply to Locke, but with Celes more or less invulnerable, the treasure hunter should be able to deal enough damage to take down the TunnelArmor on his own. (If you need to spend a round curing Locke with a potion, just have Celes do the fighting.) Your path is clear. How about Sabin's?

Sabin

It turns out Sabin's OK, but at some distance from his pals. He's come to shore on a little stretch of land that links the continent's eastern section with the mainland.

There's a house just to the east, so put in there to get your bearings.



Leo is a good-hearted imperial general who resists Kefka's criminal tactics. . . and, alas, falls victim to them.

Hey, that's Shadow over by the well. You may remember him from the cafe in South Figaro. His dog still doesn't like strangers, but Shadow doesn't seem like such a bad sort. He volunteers that the Empire has built a base beyond the forest to the southeast and has its sights set on the eastern city of Doma. He'll join you, too, but only with the proviso that he can take off when it suits him. Agree: Two heads — and sometimes three, when Shadow's dog gets into the act — are always better than one in a tussle!

The aged man in the house just seems like a crank at this point. (You won't find out what he's really about until well into the game.) He thinks you're there to repair everything from bed to breakfast. You can't help him, and you can burn yourself on the stove. Leave him, but don't forget about him.

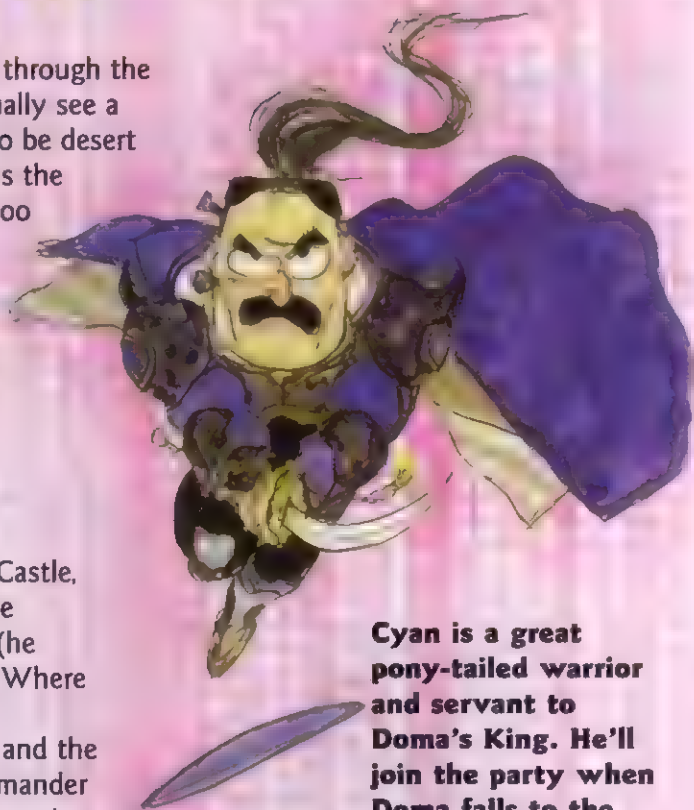
Do, however, check with the merchant who will appear on Chocobo-back every time you visit this location. Pick up Plumed Hats for both Sabin and Shadow, as well as Shuriken, Inviz Edge, and Shadow Edge for Shadow, your new ninja. Exit, save the game, and move out.



Bear east, then south through the forest, and you'll eventually see a patch of what appears to be desert to the southwest. This is the imperial camp. There's too much activity here for you to launch an attack just now,

but it's a good time for some spying. You'll automatically duck into the alcove right of the entrance and overhear two troopers' disrespectful conversation about Kefka. A power struggle appears to be developing between Terra's former mentor and the well-regarded General Leo.

The talk is interrupted by the assault on Doma Castle, and here we meet still another character: Cyan, the powerful pony-tailed retainer to Doma's King and (he says) the imperial commander's worst nightmare. (Where have we heard that before?) Cyan takes him on one-and-one — use his SwordTech ability here — and the Empire's soldiers will run like rats when their commander goes down. You'll collect a relic (Black Belt) as your prize. Cyan's bought Doma some time. . . or so it would appear.



Cyan is a great pony-tailed warrior and servant to Doma's King. He'll join the party when Doma falls to the Empire. He's not overly fond of technology. Specialty: SwordTech.

Cyan's SwordTech Attacks

Name	Number	Result	Comment
Dispatch	1	Single attack	Fast-acting and easy to use
Retort	2	Single counter-attack	
Slash	3	Halves enemy's HP	
Quadra Slam	4	4-stroke attack	One of the most efficient attacks
Empowerer	5	Absorbs enemy's HP/MP	
Stunner.	6	Multiple attack/casts Stop	
Quadra Slice	7	More powerful 4-stroke attack	
Cleave	8	Dices up enemies	A real obliterator. Learned after defeat of Wrexsoul

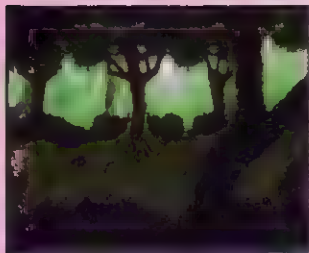


Back at the imperial camp, Sabin and Shadow finally are able to explore. The left-hand tent is empty, but a search of the right-hand one will turn up a trunk. Try to open it by hitting it, and you'll alert a guard and have to hide. Try again when he leaves, and you'll collect the Star Pendant relic. Whatever you do, we'd recommend against kicking the chest; you'll wake up the guard dog outside.)

There's no need to fight the guard who remains. Cross the bridge to the south, and you'll overhear another chat between a trooper and General Leo (who seems a very decent sort, for an imperial general). The general's been recalled to the imperial court. Oh, no. That leaves Kefka in charge, and his plans are decidedly indecent: Poison the river that surrounds the castle. You can pursue him and give him a licking, but Kefka keeps on ticking. He'll flee each time, and before long soldiers all over the parapets of Doma Castle are toppling over. Within, the King is dying, and Cyan's wife and child are already dead.

In a towering rage, Cyan goes into battle, and here Sabin and Shadow come along. Talk to Cyan to join him in each of the three combats with imperial troops — always nice to have some old-fashioned movie-style repartee! — and after the third successful bout, he'll join the party for good. The escape gets even easier when the party finds some discarded Magitek suits. Just bulldoze your way east, then north, and you're Narshe-bound.

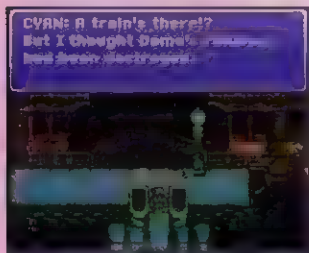
Well, sort of. Narshe's still some distance away. Head west, across the bridge, then south, then east across a second bridge and finally south into the Phantom Forest. (You can, if you like, explore the region to the southwest of the first bridge, but you won't go far; that's Doma Castle, and, like everything else in this part of the world, it's been taken over by the Empire.)



Now, this is a forest of a different color! The perspective shifts to side-view, as though it were one extended combat sequence. It might seem like that at first! The Ghosts here don't yield much in the way of experience points, but their magic-throwing abilities can make them nasty customers, so don't wander around more than you need to. The forest holds none of the chests found in the other mazes.

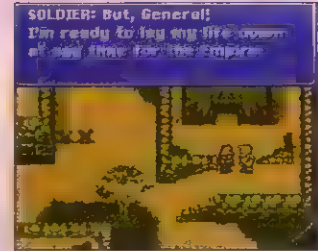
Make your way north at the end of the first screen, re-charge your batteries at the recovery spring (and check out the ghostly face in the water!), and head east again, then south. (This is the only point at which you can make a wrong turn; don't go south again here, or it's back to the first forest screen.) Head east for just a bit, north again, east again, and north once more. You may lose Shadow's services along the way.

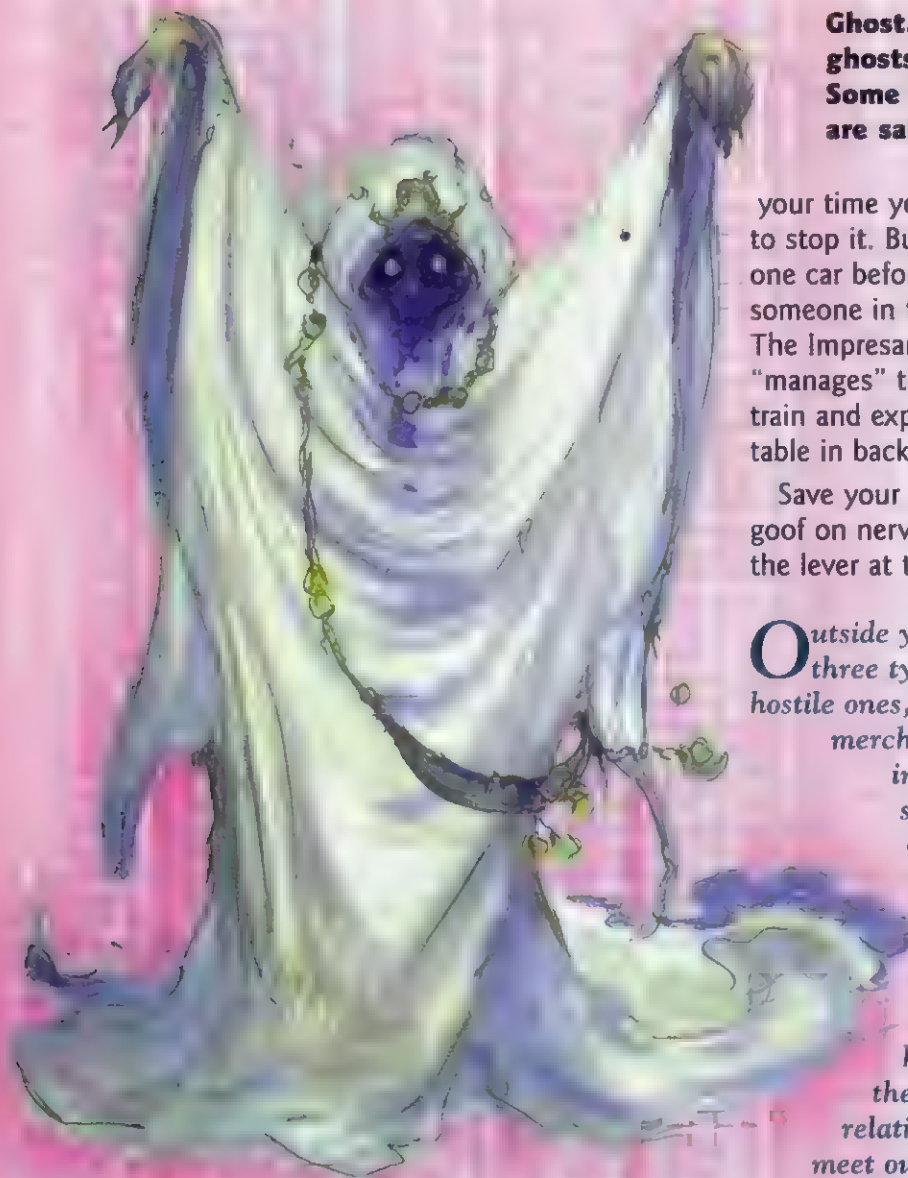
In order to keep him with you, you must choose the scenarios in the following order: 1) Terra, Edgar and Banon; 2) Sabin, and 3) Locke. (If you do Locke first, Shadow will leave in the Phantom Forest.)



Well, talk about changes of scenery! What do we have here but an old-fashioned train! Once again, Sabin's a bit too eager, and he plunges in the first available door despite Cyan's entreaties. Naturally, the train is haunted — it's in the Phantom Forest, after all. As soon as the party boards, the train starts moving, and the door you came in won't open. (Try to open it, though, or you won't be able to visit the rest of the train.)

Oh, great. Just great. This train carries the dead to The Other Side. Is that anywhere near Narshe? Nope. You don't want to go where it's going; it's not





Ghost. Actually, there are a lot of ghosts aboard the Phantom Train. Some help, some attack ... and some are salesmen!

your time yet. You need to head for the engine to stop it. But you may want to go backward one car before you go forward, because there's someone in the caboose you'd like to meet: The Impresario is a living being who "manages" the train. He'll tell you about the train and explain the blank schedules on the table in back.

Save your game at a save point here, and goof on nervous Cyan for a moment: try out the lever at the right rear of the room.

Outside you'll run into a ghost. There are three types of these on this long train: hostile ones, who will fight you if addressed; merchant ghosts, who run little invisible shops and have a corny spiel; and friendly ghosts, who will join the party and assist you in combat against their kindred spirits. They don't fight very well, but they possess an ability known as. . . well, "Possess". . . which turns them into floating kamikazes that always destroy their target, regardless of their relative strengths. Invite the ghost you meet outside to bring the party to full strength, and head left.

The first two passenger cars you'll come to are pretty straightforward. Talk to all the ghosts. Fight the baddies; they're not intimidating opponents. Restock at the shops and enlist new ghosts.

The third car's slightly trickier; it has no doors at its ends. Use the side door instead. But your exit is blocked by a ghost intoning "nnnooo essss. . . cape!", and while it's easy to bash him out of the way in combat, there are more where he came from.

Actually, a whole lot more. Yikes. The only escape is up the ladder on the side of the car. Running to the left end of the roof will give Sabin a bright idea, and off the party goes, bounding across the gaps between the cars. The second jump's a bit too long, and the party takes a tumble. The ghosts follow.

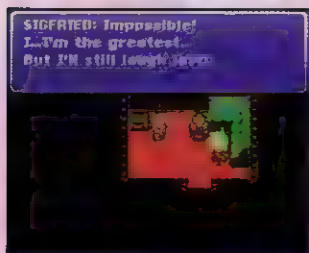


You'll need to disconnect the rear cars to really stop them, and you've tumbled into just the right spot. Enter the car on the left, throw the switch on the rear wall, and wave bye-bye to the ghosties. Re-enter, throw the switch again, and a door will open in the previously solid wall to your left. Head toward the engine again.

You may run into the Over-Mind in this car. Don't freak out at its size; it's one of the strongest enemies on the train itself but, like its cohorts, a relative pushover in a fight. It's a good spot to use your pet ghost.



The next car down the line is a diner. The waiters at the left end won't help you unless you sit down at the central table. Cyan's worried about the party eating ghost food, naturally, but Sabin figures what he doesn't know won't hurt him. (Actually, this is essentially a traveling version of a recovery spring.) Once you've boosted your energy, exit right, walk around the outside of the car, re-enter from the left end, and open the chest behind the waiters for another relic: Earrings.



Now you're into the first-class cars, consisting of private compartments. The first contains a chest. If you try to open it, you'll have to contend with its owner — named Sigfried — who claims to be the world's greatest swordsman. In fact, he's the world's greatest windbag; he does about nine points worth of damage in combat, and one blow's enough to send him scurrying off — with the chest's contents, unfortunately. You wind up with 1 GP.

Not much of a swordsman after all, is he? Don't bother following him. He's vanished entirely, and there's no way to get the prize. The fellow who looks like him in the next first-class car to the left is in fact the Impresario. (Hey, how'd he get up here?) The other compartments are empty, though you'll want to check the left-hand one for four treasure chests. Just be ready for a monster in a box — the first one of those you've seen since the classroom in Narshe — in the left-hand chest. The Specter here will take a huge amount of punishment. Speed up the process with Blitz, SwordTech attacks, and Shuriken.

And our friend the ghost? After you exit the second first-class car, he'll say goodbye. Save your game at the save point in the caboose, and head left.

Finally, the engine! Enter the door and read the instructions on the lower left wall. Throw the left and right switches on the back wall, exit again, climb atop the engine, and throw the switch near the smokestack. (You can't really see it, but it's there.)

The switch does not, as you might have imagined, stop the train. Instead, it seems to get the train righteously ticked off. In one of the funnier bits in the game, you'll find yourself running down the track, fighting all the way, pursued by an engine that shoots wheels and dumps acid rain on you. After about 2,000 HP worth of damage, it gives up and you wind up on a train platform.

Train platforms in the movies have given us more than their share of poignant scenes, and so does this one. The train is collecting new passengers, and unfortunately that includes Cyan's late wife, Elayne, and late son, Owain. It's a genuinely touching moment, and not the sort of thing one expects in a video game. Poor Cyan.



When the scene fades, you're out of the forest, but hardly out of the woods. Bear south, and then north up the valley to the east. At its far end, you'll come upon the Baren Falls. Walk to the top for a description of the location and the next course of action: through the Veldt and east to the town of Mobliz. (Boy, this is definitely the long way around to Narshe.) If Shadow is still with you here, he'll leave now — with no response to Sabin's thanks.

Take a breather here. It's another one of those spots where FF3's artists outdid themselves with effects. The falls are gorgeous, and the shaft of light in the entry cave is a nice touch.

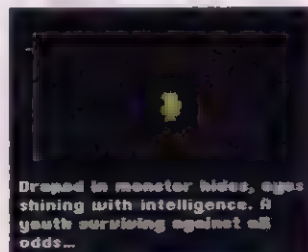
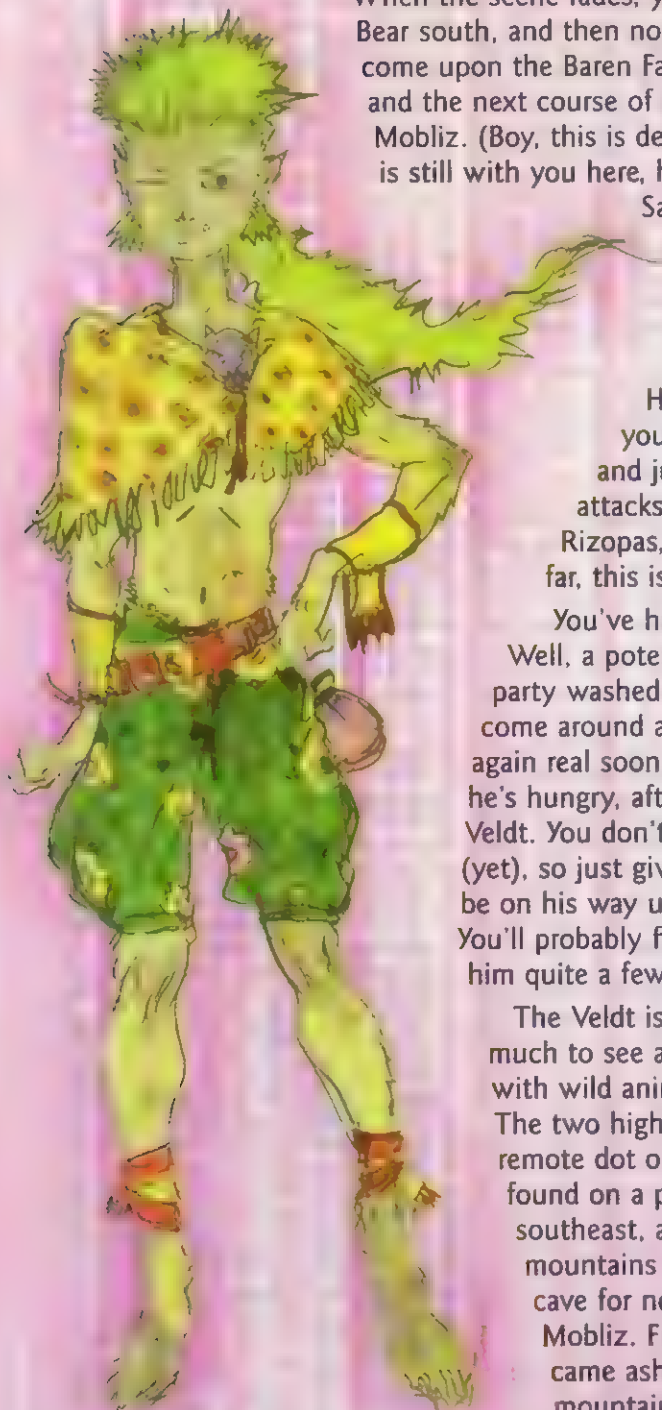
However, Baren Falls may seem like a dead end unless you're willing to take a leap of faith: Walk to the edge, and jump. Really. You'll be OK, provided you survive the attacks of the dozen Piranha — and those of the fish boss, Rizopas, on the way down. (Like much of the fighting so far, this is a might-makes-right battle.)

You've hardly lost Shadow when you gain a new companion. Well, a potential companion, at any rate. The boy Gau finds the party washed up on a rocky shore, but he takes off when you come around and ask his name. Don't worry; you'll run into him again real soon. He'll turn up, saying he's hungry, after many combats in the Veldt. You don't have anything for him (yet), so just give him a whack and he'll be on his way until the next combat. You'll probably find yourself whacking him quite a few times.

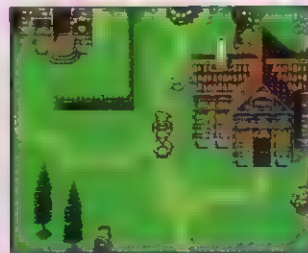
The Veldt is a big, flat place, with not much to see and lots of encounters with wild animals and imperial patrols. The two highlights are Mobliz, a remote dot on the map that can be found on a peninsula to the southeast, and a cave in the mountains farther south. Ignore the cave for now and make straight for Mobliz. From the spot where you came ashore, head east to the sea, south around the mountains, east again, then north.

Gau was thrown out of the house by his father shortly after his birth and grew up in the wilds of the Veldt. Specialty: Rage.

Mobliz seems very cut-off. The residents know of war only from letters, and those come only by carrier pigeon. However, it has all the comforts of home.



Draped in monster hides, eyes shining with intelligence. A youth surviving against all odds...





Places to Go in Mobliz

- *An Inn* (a bit pricey at 100 GP a night). Make that your first stop if the Veldt was rough on your HP.
- *An Arsenal*. Use a shopping cart. Depending on how rich you are, you have tons of goodies to pick up here. You'll want to collect a Mithril Claw for Sabin; an Iron Helmet, Iron Armor, and Kotetsu for Cyan (who's now outfitted like a real warrior); and any odds and ends that might be useful to other members of the party when you're reunited. Do at least get Magus Hats for Terra and Celes.
- *The Item Shop*. It holds the usual stuff — with one exception, which we'll get to in a second.

Make your usual rounds of the citizenry. You'll find that the talk of the town at the southern end is the child thrown out of his home by his father, who thought he was a monster. An animal is more like it, and if you visit the Item Shop, you'll put two and two together: It's Gau.

Buy the dried meat, and remember it next time you meet the little schnook.

But there's more to Mobliz than first meets the eye. A couple of mini-quests are shaping up.

Climbing up to the second level of the town puts you in front of a house where carrier pigeons are perching. (You can talk to them, and they'll chatter back at you.) Walk around to the right side of the delivery service and speak with the man you'll find there. He'll tell you about how strong currents in the Serpent Trench will sweep you all the way to the town of Nikeah to the northwest. (Watch this bit; it's a real treat.)

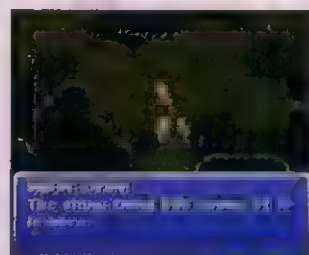
This sounds like the next leg of your journey, doesn't it? Wrong! The trouble is, as the man notes, the town's underwater breathing device has been stolen. What can that mean?

Also visit the house just to the west. A soldier from the town of Maranda (on the southern continent) lies wounded here, and there's a hush around the place. He's not doing well, but he has enough strength to explain that he was forcibly drafted into the invading imperial army, ran away when he learned it was heading for Doma, and was captured by imperial troops. He can't move, poor guy, and he's kept going only by letters from his girlfriend, Lola, back home.

Look! There's a letter on the desk. Read it to the wounded soldier. He'd like to write back, but he'll need help. Go back to the delivery service; the proprietor will tell you it costs 500 GP to send a letter to Maranda. That sounds reasonable to us. If you're out of cash after your shopping spree at the Arsenal, do a little "fundraising" with the local monsters. Then come back and see the soldier. You'll be pleased to see his spirit seems revived.

At first, you won't get anything tangible for your trouble. But then, you shouldn't expect a reward for a good deed. However, if you keep trying, you will eventually get an item from the soldier — it's the Tintinabar relic; the bearer will recover HP with every step.

You've pretty much seen all the entertainment Mobliz has to offer. It's time to go look for Gau. This time, when he shows up after a battle, don't whack him. Instead, use the Item command to give him the dried meat, then sit back and enjoy the long, richly comic routine that follows. (Everybody makes fun of Cyan's thee-and-thou speech.)





Gau will join you, which is like having a puppy in the party. He'll offer to lead you to something shiny at Crescent Mountain. That should ring more than one bell. If you talked to the worker in the cellar of the delivery service, you know that it's north of the Serpent Trench.

Pay attention, now, as you're about to get a little in-game primer on how to enhance Gau's abilities. Using the Leap command when fighting alongside Gau in the Veldt permits him to disappear. When he returns, he's learned the attacks of the monsters you were fighting. The Rage command then implements those attacks. Gau is that which he attacks, and if you use this carefully, he'll build on an incredible repertoire of techniques.

Head south across the Veldt until you reach a mountain range, then west around the "crescent" curve, and enter the cave. Gau doesn't remember quite where his shiny treasure is, but this isn't a big place. Head north, then east, then south again. Gau will dig it up at the appropriate point. Naturally, it's the underwater breathing device you heard of back in Mobliz, and you can put it to use almost immediately because the exit straight south of you overlooks the Serpent Trench.

(By the way, while in the cave, do stop to admire the rock formations, but don't go to the far northwestern corner. Gau, more monkey than man, will choose this moment to drop your money pouch into the crevasse. It's a shame there's not an option to throw him in after it!)

OK, everybody into the pool! There's not much to do here as you flow along, but let the tide take you where it will. You'll need to fight in some spots and steer in others. When in doubt, bear right.

There's also the opportunity to pick up some freebies in the undersea caves you'll find along the way. The first is very straightforward, but the second has a little trick: You'll need to stand on the pressure plate in the southeastern corner of the first screen to drain the pool to the west, and then hop down the drain.

Next stop: Nikeah. You'll come to on the Nikeah docks, beside a ship that looks very like the one you saw in South Figaro. It's probably the same one because that's where it's going. Don't hop aboard quite yet, though, as Nikeah bears some investigation. This town, on a coastal island in the northern continent's great southern bay, is almost two communities — the docks to the south, thronging with people and merchants, and the more sedate town to the north.



Cyan.



The man walking in the town portion makes reference to a rockslide blocking the path north. (Ignore him; what he says has a certain relevance to the game, but there is no land route out of Nikeah.) The cafe's mainly good for a laugh — watch prim and proper Cyan squirm as the dancer flirts with him — but also for tidbits about the southern continent (which we haven't heard much about) and the story (obviously Gau's) told by the lady at the front table.

You can also pick up some new items from the merchants. Smoke Bomb allows the party to escape from battle. Edgar could use a Mithril Pike. And the relic salesman is offering Fairy Ring (protection against Poison and Dark) and the expensive White Cape (protection against Imp and Mute), which you might not have had the cash to buy in Mobliz.

But this is more a place of business than of puzzles, and before long you'll be on the boat for South Figaro, wondering about the other party members.

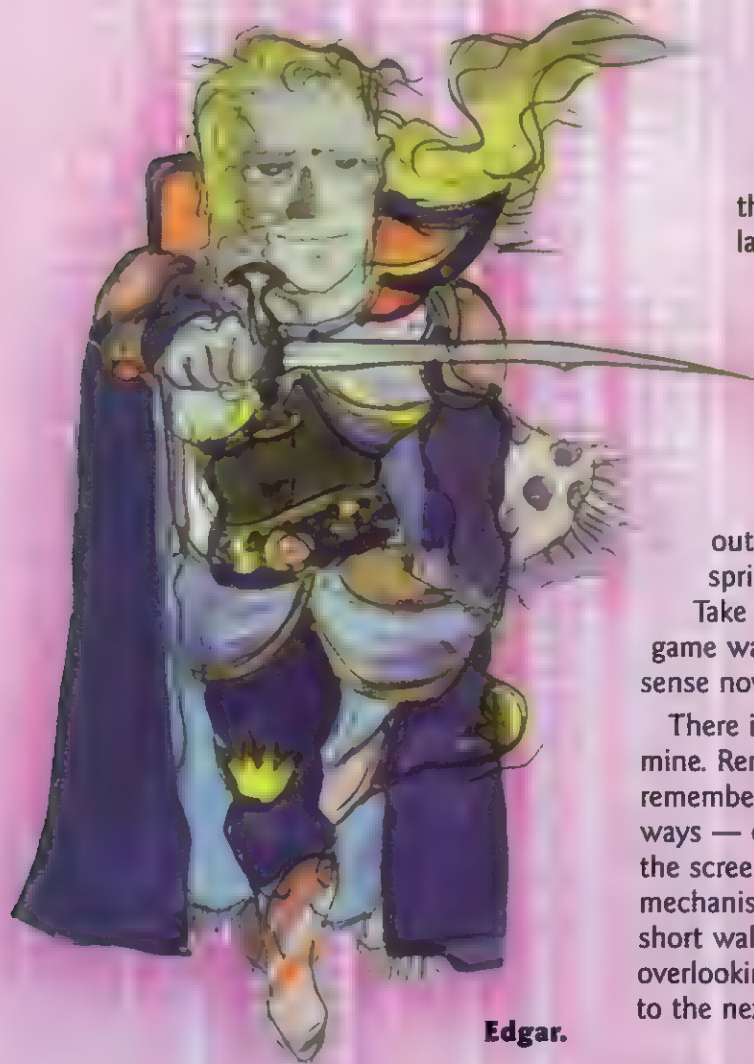
Terra, Edgar, and Banon

This party's ride up the rapids after meeting the octopus is drawing to an end. The trio lands just southeast of Narshe; just bear west along the shore, through the cleft in the mountains, and then north.

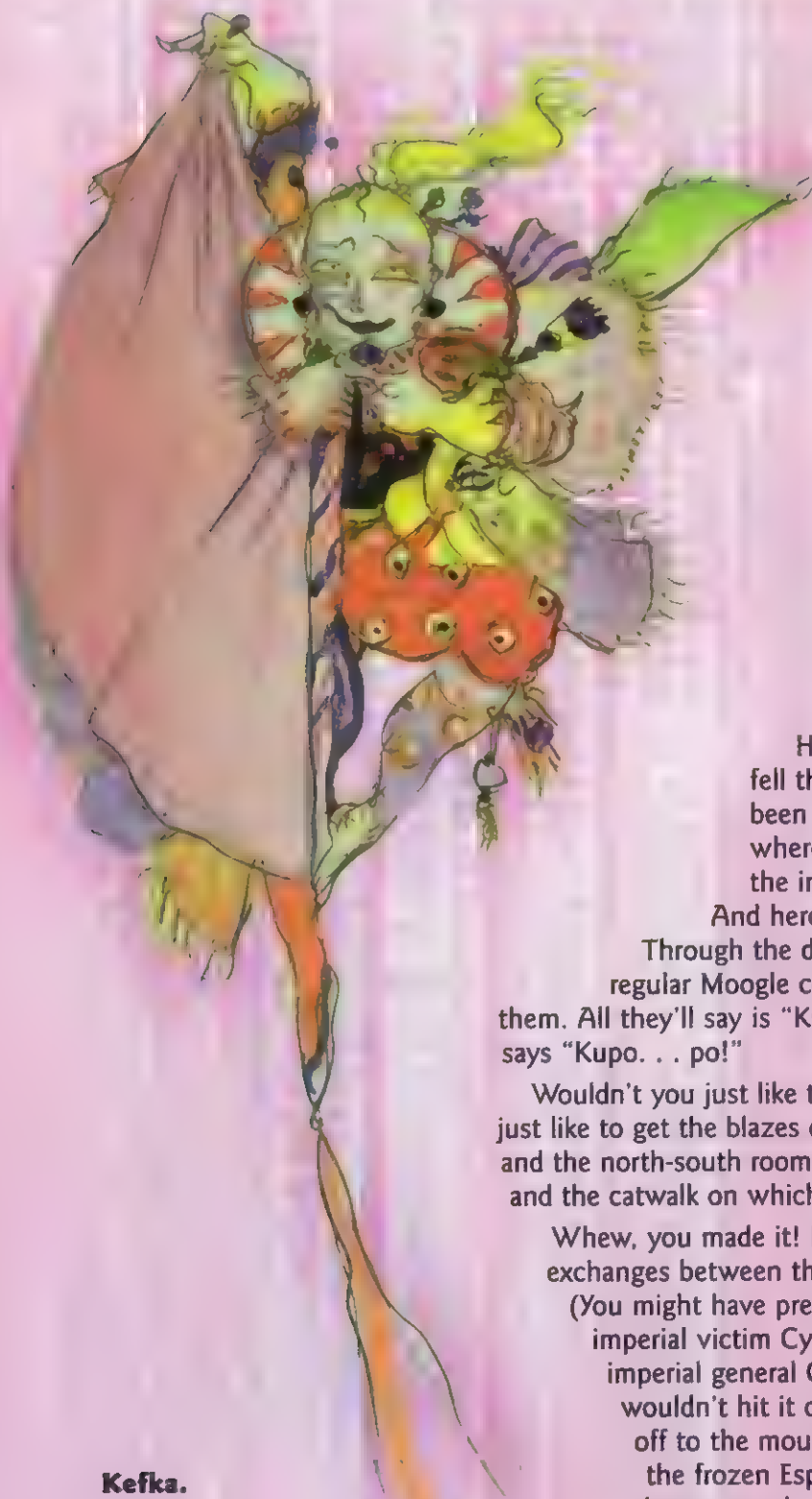
Don't bother trying to get into Narshe by the front gate. Banon and Edgar will just get the heave-ho. You'll have to find another way.

However, do stop in at the classroom outside the walls for a drink from the recovery spring and another chat with the professors. Take notes. A lot of what they said when the game was just starting will make especially good sense now.

There is a way into Narshe, and it's through the mine. Remember Locke admonishing Terra to remember the secret exit? Well, that works both ways — entrance as well as exit. Head west along the screen border, then north. Edgar fiddles with the mechanism automatically, the door opens, and a short walk later, there you are, on a rocky bluff overlooking the town. Take the stairs to the west up to the next mine entrance.



Edgar.



Kefka.

This passage will ultimately lead to a small maze. The Empire's been up to some wickedness here: It has installed a security system. You'll have to follow precisely the path of the roving light which appears; if not, the party will be trapped and will have to restart the course. It's a simple course; if you miss a turn while you still have the light in sight, just step back out of the room and re-enter, and the light will give an encore performance. Easy on the joypad here — just take it one step at a time. (You may find a creative use for this little maze later in the game.)

Now, this should all be familiar terrain. Here's the spot where a cornered Terra fell through the floor. Evidently there have been repairs since then! And here's the maze where Locke and the Moogles faced off with the imperial commander during Terra's rescue.

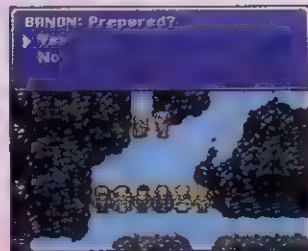
And here's. . . well, no, this isn't familiar at all.

Through the door just north of where Terra fell is a regular Moogle convention. (Don't bother talking to them. All they'll say is "Kupo!," except the stationary one who says "Kupo. . . po!")

Wouldn't you just like to put 'em in your pocket? Wouldn't you just like to get the blazes outta here? The exit's to the northwest, and the north-south room beyond leads back to familiar territory and the catwalk on which Terra made her escape.

Whew, you made it! Now, sit back and enjoy all the exchanges between the characters.

(You might have predicted that imperial victim Cyan and former imperial general Celes wouldn't hit it off.) Then it's off to the mountains, where the frozen Esper has been moved.





The Big Fight

The Empire's never been that far behind the party, and now it's right in its face. This is one hairy business: a jumbo-size version of Locke's defense of Terra in the Narshe mines. In this corner, at the southern end of the screen, Kefka and about a dozen squads of imperial troopers. In the north, Banon and all the members of all three parties.

No one's rushing you here, so be slow and methodical in your preparations.

THINGS TO DO

- Optimize each character's equipment. (This is why you've been buying stuff even for characters who weren't in the active party at the time.)
- Bring the HP and MP up to full.
- Make sure the appropriate relics are equipped — for instance, Earrings for the spellcasters to enhance spell damage, Hyper Wrist and Sniper Sight for the fighters.
- Save the game at the save point to the northeast.
- Notify Banon that you're ready.
- Hang onto your hat.

Designing Your Battle Groups

At this point, you'll have to assign the characters to three battle groups. Don't go for balance. You're only trying to get Kefka, not kill the world. Put the two best fighters (Cyan and Sabin) and both spellcasters (Terra and Celes) in one party. This is your strike force, designed to deliver maximum damage in minimum time. The other two groups — the specific members don't matter — should be placed at Banon's east and south sides. (This means you don't have to cover all the different possible passages.) These are purely blocking forces designed to prevent unobstructed approach to the Returner leader. If Cyan and company do their job speedily, the blocking forces should not see action.

Send Cyan's group on its way. Just remember: You want to get to Kefka as quickly and as cleanly as possible. Do not begin combat with the troops en route unless you have to, and do not block their path unnecessarily. (Unfortunately, you'll have to fight the creature running back and forth in front of Kefka.)

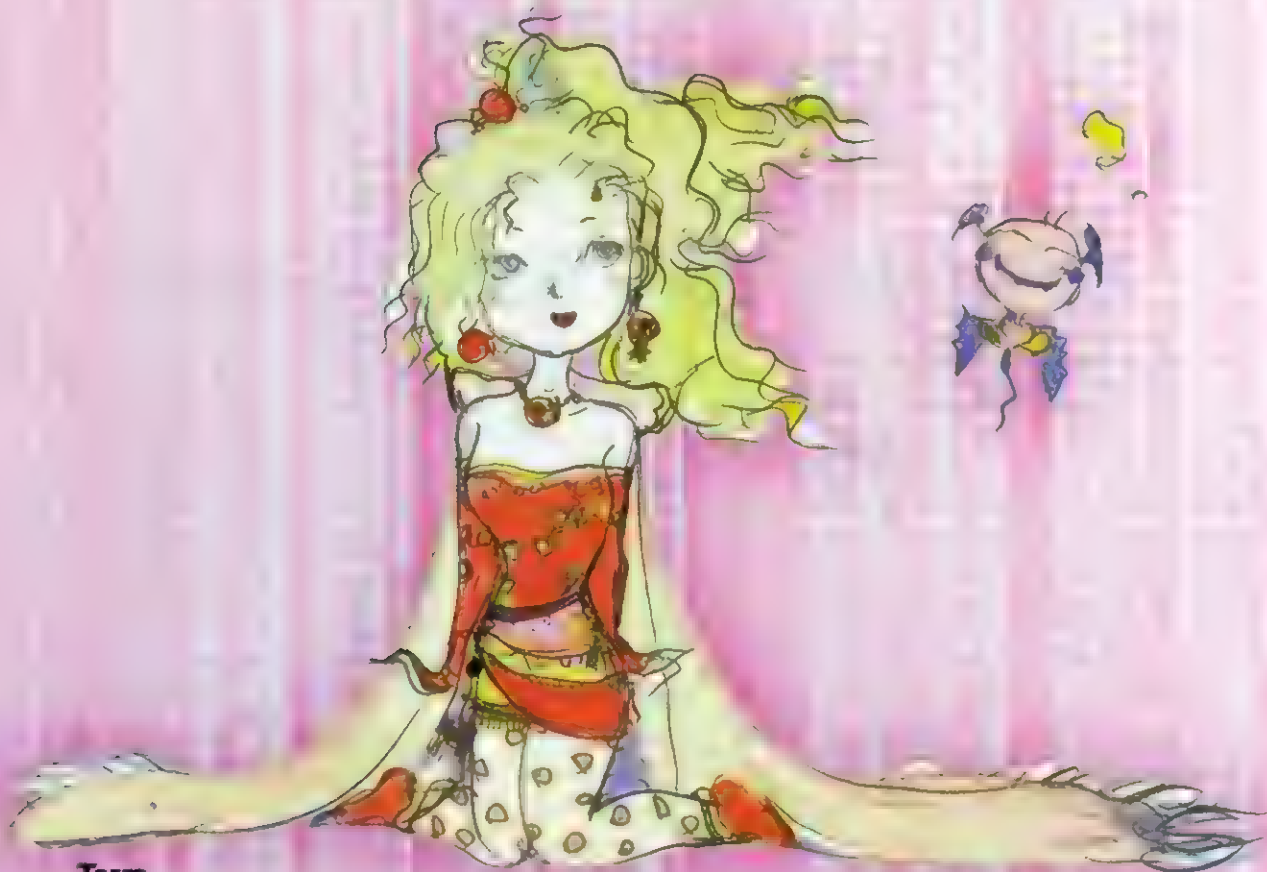
And when you get to Kefka himself, don't experiment — just blast away with SwordTech and Blitz techniques and Fire and Ice spells until he cries uncle. Kefka's right, you haven't heard the last of him. But if you win this battle, you've bought some maneuvering space as the Empire temporarily withdraws. Well done!



Kefka is at level 18. He has 3,000 MP and 3,000 HP.

And yet it is a bittersweet victory. For Terra does not survive her subsequent encounter with the Esper — not as Terra, anyway. Again, blue lightning arcs between them. Again, a pale blue glow. And then, an explosion that almost sends the party off the precipice, and a metamorphosis: Terra is gone, and something pink and wild goes screaming into the sky and flies into the west.

It is at once tragic and strangely jubilant, and you leave this first section of FF3 wondering: Is Terra the Returners' last hope in the war against the Empire. . . or is she simply the war's first casualty?



Terra.

FINAL FANTASY III

PART 2 IN SEARCH OF TERRA





Narshe

It's a bit odd to suddenly be without Terra — it's almost like a death in the family. It shouldn't be much of a surprise that your next task is to track her down.

Because Terra flew west, the plan is to make first for Figaro Castle and use its burrowing ability to travel beyond the mountains to Kohlingen in the western part of the continent.

Getting to Figaro from Narshe is easy enough. But wait a second. While we've been around Narshe for much of the game, the party has never had a chance to really explore it. With the withdrawal of the Empire, it's open to inquiring minds. Take this opportunity to check it out. There's enough here to make the trip that follows a bit easier.

However, first off, you'll need to split up the party again. True, you've barely had a chance to say "hello" when off you go again. But the parting here is necessary, for someone's got to look for Terra, and someone's got to stay behind and look after Narshe.

But how do you know whom to take? Up to now, the story's made these decisions for you. Well, reason it out. Celes is a must; she's the only magic user remaining. Cyan and Sabin are your big fighters. And for the fourth slot, think instinctively. Remember Locke's vow to protect Terra? You know he'd like to go. (Besides, he's been twiddling his thumbs ever since he got out of South Figaro. It'll be good for him to get out of the house.)

You can change your mind, too. If you decide to toy with the party's makeup, simply talk to any of the members pacing the floor at Arvis's house (Arvis is the old man who first harbored Terra), and you'll be given a chance to change members. Talk to all the left-behind members anyway just for fun; they all have slightly different takes on the situation.

OK, let's go see Narshe. Built right into the mountains, it can be a little confusing, what with overhangs to hide the party, and stairs and cliffs to get it crossed up. But the most important building is close at hand. Head south from Arvis's house, staying to the right of the stairs, then cross a bridge, and you'll come to an out-of-the-way warehouse.

You've hit a mother lode! Six of the seven chests here can be opened, and the contents include some especially useful relics and weapons, including the Peace Ring (which protects against Muddle and Berserk) and the Wall Ring (which casts Reflect and sends many spells back at their casters).

Looking at Your Own Reflection

The Reflect spell is blessing and a curse. It protects you from a lot of enemy magic. But when used by the enemy, it also sends your own spells bouncing back at you. And even if you're using Reflect yourself, the spells don't just bounce off. They hurt.

That should tell you something: Reflected magic can't be stopped by Reflect. (Otherwise, spells might never stop bouncing, and combat could last forever.) Use it to your advantage. When facing opponents that reflect your spells, aim your blasts instead at party members who are running the Reflect spell. Your spells will bounce off, but hit the enemy.



The seventh? Ah, the one in the back corner is locked. Leave it for now, but talk later to the owner — he's the fellow standing to the left of the house on a lower level — for a teasing comment. You'll straighten this out soon enough.

For your spending pleasure, the Armor Shop is just left of Arvis's house. (Have a look at the Mithril Shield in particular.) Out the left-hand exit and left of the arch is the Item Shop. (Nothing really new here, although you may want to replenish your stock of healing supplies after the to-do with

Kefka.) Just to the south is the Inn, with big-city prices: 200 GP per night. (The farther you travel into the game, the higher the inn prices.)

Slightly to the northwest of the Inn is the Weapon Shop. Keep some money in reserve for this visit, as you'll want a Flail (for Celes), Full Moon (for Locke), and, possibly, a Mithril Pike for Edgar. (The owner also doesn't seem to mind you catching a few winks in his back bedroom, if the Inn's price seems too steep.)

Finally, just north of here is the Relics Shop. You've seen all the merchandise before in one form or another, except Mithril Glove (which casts Safe when the wearer's HP are low).

You can also talk with the Elder, who lives in the far northwest part of town; just head up the stairs and then left down the hidden path. His mixed feelings about the Returners-vs.-Empire match are typical among the town's people. (Seems they'd rather keep to themselves than take sides — the old "Not In My Back Yard" argument.)

While you're at it, you can also explore the mines more thoroughly. This isn't necessary, and is offered only to satisfy your curiosity. There's little to see, and not much monster fighting or treasure hunting. But certain areas are open that weren't open before — make your first right when you enter — and you can take a peek at the Esper and check out the battleground where you sent Kefka packing.

While they're there, keep an eye on the mountainside above the entrance. Nope, you're not seeing things. There's definitely something up there. You just can't reach it yet.

An Encore of Figaro

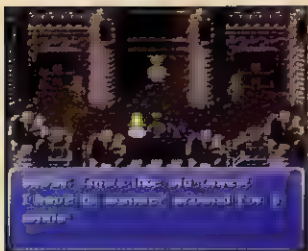
Figaro's a short jaunt away. Edgar's mole-like castle is in the location where you left it, and back on the surface. If Sabin's in the party, he'll split as soon as you enter to check out his old digs, which leaves the remaining three free to explore. And if Edgar's in your party, he'll have a flashback when he goes to sleep.

Some things have changed. The left-hand shop now offers Revivify and the tool shop on the right has Drill and Flash. (Get 'em; Drill is a killer weapon against Magitek armor.) The castle's two wings are off-limits this time, blocked by motherly guards who suggest it's nap time, but some of the characters you saw earlier will have new things to say.



Items of note:

- Kefka's been spotted in the area. (Oh, not him again!)
- So has Terra. (So you're on the right track.)
- A librarian will put you on to the engine room chief.



The engine room chief is someone you'll need to chat with to get this castle on the road. If you didn't explore fully on your first visit, he's down the left-hand stairs from the castle foyer.

Don't feel you have to confine yourself to the castle, either. If you're out of cash after your shopping spree in Narshe and can't afford the new tools, feel free to go monster-mashing for some quick bucks.

Your characters should have advanced quite a bit since the last visit, but the monsters of Figaro haven't. There's actually not much in the desert aside from critters to kill. (And no, there's no way to cross the western mountains on foot.)

But near the southwestern corner, there's a patch of forest. Go to the center and you'll find, of all things, a Chocobo rental outlet. It's handy if you want to take a quick trip back to Narshe to swap out any characters you've had second thoughts about.

Kohlingen

But we're getting off track here. Head for the castle's engine room and ask the man you'll find there to take you to Kohlingen. It's as good as done. The castle will descend, pass under the mountains, and surface in the desert just south of that small northwestern town.

Talk to the fellow strolling near the entrance, and you'll quickly learn you've come to the right place. Terra has been here, and she either scared, or touched, much of the population before heading south toward Jidoor.

Before you follow her, explore a bit. Kohlingen isn't big compared to some other communities. (All its businesses are condensed into two buildings.) But it's got more than its share of kooks and grim memories. For starters, Shadow's at a table in the Inn/Cafe beside the town entrance, and he's as unsociable as ever. So's his dog. Don't waste your breath.

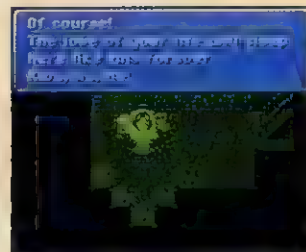
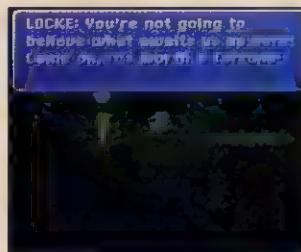
Talking to the townsfolk, you'll hear a tale of a man who lives alone to the north and dreams of building a colosseum. And while the house in the northwest corner of town is deserted now, a visit will set off a long reverie by Locke about a treasure-hunting expedition in which his love, Rachel, took a fall and lost her memory.



Rachel's father, blaming Locke, angrily banished him from the house. Returning a year later, Locke learned Rachel had died in an accident. He's still stricken with guilt. No wonder he took pity on Terra and Celes, and no wonder he's made vows to protect them.

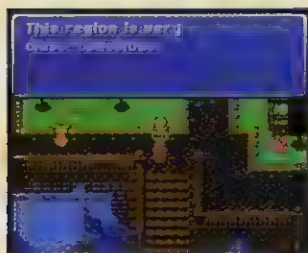
Now, here's the weird thing. Visit the cellar of the house east of the river, and you'll discover Rachel's not dead at all. She's not up dusting the furniture, writing novels, or anything, but she's not worm food, either. She's been placed in suspended animation, *Sleeping Beauty*-style, by the local herbalist — another of the kooks you'll be warned away from — at Locke's request. When this memory fades, you can move on again.

"But what about our usual shopping expedition?" you cry. Not a big Kohlingen pastime. The only new items of note are the Fire Skee and two new Edge weapons (Water and Bolt) in the Weapons Shop. (The Head Band available in the Armor Shop is also new, but not essential, as it represents an upgrade only for Shadow, who isn't a member of the active party. And you'll pick it up after a combat later in the game.)



Jidoor

Jidoor is a long but straight shot south from Kohlingen. Unlike the hodge-podge one sees in the other towns, it's laid out in a conventional fashion: a long, central boulevard of street and staircase.

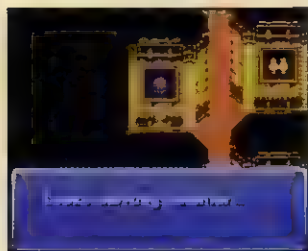


This is very much a class-based society. The rich live in the northern part of town, the middle class in the south. And the poor. . . well, the poor don't live here at all. As you'll learn from the townsfolk, they picked up and left for the mountains to the north, where they've built a town called Zozo.

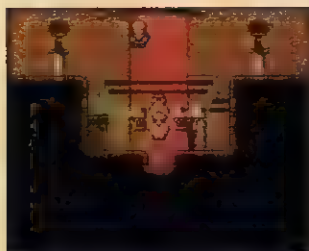
For a real taste of Jidoorian snobbery, stop by the auction house — east side of the town's second level — and talk to the attendees. The auction is over, but you'll also get an interesting tip about an item to recover wayward spirits. Hmm! That could be what Rachel needs.

Terra appears to have headed for Zozo as well. We'll follow her in short order, but first there's business to attend to here.

The city's wealth does have some assets for the party: lots of pricey goods in the stores. At the Weapon Shop, pick up Forged for Cyan, Kaiser for Sabin, and, in anticipation of Shadow's rejoining you at some point, a Kodachi for the assassin. At the Armor Shop, get Ninja Gear for Locke and Sabin and White Dress for Celes. (Hey, is this is a fight or a formal?) And at the Relics Shop, check out the Barrier Ring (which casts Shell when HP are low).



Indeed, one of the few buildings in town that isn't a business is Owzer's House in the far north. This big, split-level dwelling is in large part an art gallery. The canvases consist of many of the ordinary objects from FF3 itself — a pail, an open chest. . . even the octopus that Sabin tangled with on the Lete. The only person home — presumably, Owzer himself — can be



found in the east bedroom. He tells Celes she looks just like an opera singer named Maria.

Put this together with the reference you'll get from a child on the streets, and you'll figure you should be looking for an Opera House. (Well, duh!) It's at the tip of the wiry peninsula south of Jidoor, and it's closed at the moment. So skip it unless you fancy a long walk with lots of fighting.

Instead, set your sights on Zozo. It's reached by heading northeast from Jidoor and then following this narrow stretch of land for as far as you can.

Suggestion: Make the trip on Chocobo (rented in Jidoor). You'll be doing more fighting here than you've done in any location up to this point, and there's no reason to waste your strength on the way.

Zozo

Er, maybe those rich folks in Jidoor were right. This is a lousy town. It's like nothing you've seen in the game so far, and there's nothing nice about it. Unlike the quaint communities of South Figaro and Kohlingen, this is a grim, modern city; it's almost like something out of the movie "Blade Runner." The first real building you'll come to has a body outside, and the guy behind the desk inside looks like he escaped from Figaro Castle's dungeon. It's inhabited by large and dangerous characters, and small, non-dangerous characters who can't tell time. You enter it from the east (the side).

And, of course, it's raining. Thank you very much, Mr. Weather.

The good news is that Zozo isn't as sprawling as, say, Narshe, with just five buildings. Some you see to the south are just for art's sake, and some that you can enter hold only chests. However, the town's larger than it looks — all those floors and staircases in the high-rises — so don't underestimate your task. Come well-supplied with Potions and Tinctures, and, when convenient, make your way out the exit and save your game.

Zozo's Monsters

So where do you go first? Um, could we possibly make it the exit now? The monsters here are one serious bunch. The HadesGigas is the toughest and nastiest. It doesn't do devastating damage in hand-to-hand attacks, but just before it gives up the ghost, it will usually try out a Magnitude8 spell, which will cost each member of the party around 250 HP. The way around it: Force, early on, and lots of it. Hit it with the Blitz and SwordTechs of choice and Ice magic to use up its 1,200 HP before it senses its own impending death and decides you're coming into the Hereafter with it.

(It may seem as though you can't steal from the Hades, but you can. Just be persistent, and you'll eventually get an Atlas Armlet relic, which enhances combat damage bestowed by the wearer.)

You'll also have to reckon with Gabbleddegaks. They look like beetles standing upright and, again, can't contend in hand-to-hand, but they use Vanish spells to make themselves invisible (as well as Potions to recover strength) and then pick away at the party. Once invisible, the Gabble is impervious to normal weapons and advanced techniques like Blitz and SwordTech, but can still be struck down by magic, special attacks such as Aura Bolt, Fire Dance, and Air Blade, and by Gau's Rage attacks.



SlamDancer is a lesser threat — she can be knocked off quickly with ordinary weapons — but she's prone to unleashing party-wide Bolt and Ice spells. Attack her first, or with spells that affect all enemies.

Careful with that Harvester, as well. A wimpy fighter, it rewards attempts to steal its possessions with fingers in your pocketbook to the tune of about 4,000 GP. (If you win the battle, you get it back.)

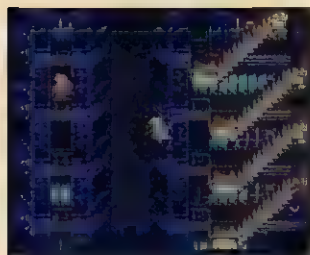
Well, there are two main tasks to master in Zozo. One is finding Terra, and the other is being a Good Samaritan and helping this wretched town get back on time.

Terra's on the top floor of the skyscraper in the southwest part of town. The trick is that the floor is not directly accessible from the street; to get to Terra, you'll need to perform some building-to-building leaps.

The building itself is west, south, and then the first door to the west. Once you reach the third floor, you'll discover the party has become mingled with some sort of work gang whose members each have a different idea of the time. Just make note of what they say; it'll come in handy, in a strange sort of way, a bit later. At the top of stairs, you'll find yourself alone at the base of a fire escape. Head up this a few flights and. . . Oh, never mind. It seems there's something in the way. Go back down two floors and use the open door.

You say it doesn't go anywhere? Wrong! Bear left as soon as you enter and you'll find the party perched in a window. Ignore the warning you may have heard in town earlier and jump to the next tower to the left. Then do it again. (There's no danger to the party.) Inside, bear north, then west; check the pot at the back of the room for a Potion and talk to the fellow at the desk for another tidbit about the time. (He tells you the second hand of his watch is pointing at four.) South, out, and up a flight, you'll meet a man who reports that seconds are divisible by 20. (Yeah, right! Is this beginning to make any sense yet?)

You've still got a ways to go. Use the window to jump two buildings back over to the right, and just keep going up. Climb one flight outside, head inside, and climb the stairs for three more, then out again and up yet two more. (Here, behind a closed door, you'll find the Fire Knuckle weapon).



Just one more flight — do you have any notion of just how high up you are now? — and talk to the guard. He's all over-done courtesy, and since he's standing where he is, naturally he's going to try to do you in. He's an oddly easy opponent — get him quickly, however, or he'll summon reinforcements. He's also profitable: You can steal a Jewel Ring relic from him, and obtain a Thief Knife after combat.

And here, finally, at the northern end of the penthouse, is Terra. Sort of. She looks like. . . well, like a naked pink troll doll. She can't talk, and she goes into a fit shortly after you arrive. What gives here?

Ramuh, a magical Esper, appears and explains things a bit. He summoned Terra when he sensed she was in trouble. Terra's afraid of her own existence, he says. She's not an Esper herself, as you may have suspected, but Ramuh manages to avoid saying what precisely she is.

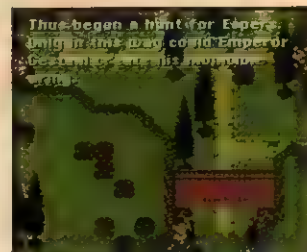
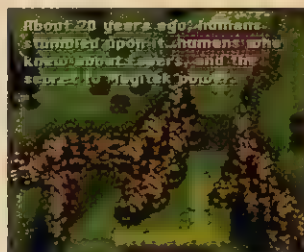
He's more revealing about the Empire's plans: Many Espers are trapped in the



Magitek research facility on the southern continent and being drained of their powers. Free them, and one should be able to help Terra.

The Empire has made a basic error in its thinking. It seems you can't drain all power from a live Esper. Only when an Esper is reduced to elemental form (a Magicite shard) can its abilities be transferred to another being.

And that's going to give you an advantage right from the get-go. For, as you'll discover shortly, you have at your command four Magicite shards — three from Espers who fell while escaping the Empire (Stray, Siren, and Kirin), and one from Ramuh, who sacrifices himself for your cause.



Magicite

Here are the 27 Magicite shards you'll find in the game. The chart lists the spells party members can learn, their effects on stats when levels are raised, the effects of Espers when summoned in combat, and the shards' locations in the game.

Note that the shards become available only at certain points in the game. You'll find more detailed information on when and how they appear in the book.

Esper	Spells	In Combat	Lvl Up	Location
Alexander . . .	Pearl, Shell, Safe Dispell, Remedy	Mystic purity attack	None	King's Room in Doma Castle (after Cyan's dream)
Bahamut . . .	Flare	Cuts through magic defenses	Hit points + 50%	After defeat of Doom Gaze
Bismark . . .	Fire, Ice, Bolt, Life	Water-elemental attack	Strength + 2	Magitek Research Center
Carbunkl . . .	Reflect, Haste, Shell, Safe, Warp	Casts Reflect on party	None	Magitek Research Center
Crusader . . .	Merton, Meteor.	Attack harms party and enemy	Magic Points + 50%	After defeat of 8 Dragons
Fenrir	Warp, Xzone, Stop	Makes multiple images of party	Magic Points + 30%	Mobliz (from child after battle with Phunbaba)



Golem	Safe, Stop,	Protects party	Stamina + 2	Jidoor auction house)
	Cure 2			
Ifrit	Fire, Fire 2,	Fire-elem. attack	Strength + 1	Magitek Factory (Trash bin)
	Drain			
Kirin	Cure, Cure 2,	Recovers HP	None	Zozo (with Terra)
	Regen, Antidote, Scan			
Maduin	Fire 2, Ice 2,	Non-elem. attack	Magic	Magitek Research Center
	Bolt 2		Power + 1	
Odin*	Meteor.	Slices through		Odin in hall of underground castle
		enemies		
Palidor	Haste, Haste 2,	Jump attack.	None	Beach on Celes' island
	Slow, Slow 2, Float			
Phantom	Beserk, Vanish,	Makes party	Magic Points	Magitek Research Center
	Demi	invisible	+ 10%	
Phoenix	Life, Life 2,	Recovers	None	Star-shaped mountain
	Life 3, Cure 3, Fire 3	battle status		
Ragnarok**	Ultima	Turns enemy	None	Narshe weapon shop
		into item		
Raiden***	Quick	Slices through	Strength + 2	Stone queen in underground castle
		enemies		
Ramuh	Bolt, Bolt 2,	Lightning-	Stamina + 1	Zozo (with Terra)
	Poison	elemental attack		
Shiva	Ice, Ice 2,	Ice elemental attack	None	Magitek Factory (Trash bin)
	Rasp, Osmose, Cure			
Shoat	Bio, Break,	Petrifies	Hit Points	Magitek Research Center
	Doom	enemies	+ 10%	
Siren	Sleep, Mute,	Silences enemies	Hit Points	Zozo (with Terra)
	Slow, Fire		+ 10%	
Sraphim	Life, Cure,	Recovers HP	None	Tzen (in woods)
	Cure 2, Regen, Remedy			
Starlet	Cure, Cure 2,	Recovers HP	Stamina + 2	Owzer's house (after defeat of Chadarnook)
	Cure 3, Regen, Remedy			



Stray	Muddle, Imp, . . .	Confuses enemies . .	Magic	Zozo
	Float		Power +1	(with Terra)
Terrato	Quake, Quarter,. .	Earth elem. attack . .	Hit Points . . .	Narshe mine
	W. Wind		+ 30%	(section opened by Tritoch)
Tritoch.	Fire 3, Ice 3,	Ice/Fire/.	Magic	North of
	Bolt 3	Lightning	Power +2	Narshe
		3-way attack		(through mines)
Unicorn	Cure 2, Remedy, .	Casts Remedy on. . .	None	Magitek
	Dispell, Safe,	party		Research Center
	Shell			
Zoneseek	Rasp, Osmose,. . .	Casts Shell	Magic	Jidoor
	Shell	on party	Power +2	(auction house)

***Odin changes into Raiden shard.**

****Ragnarok can be changed into powerful sword.**

*****Raiden is an advanced version of Odin shard.**

Fortunately, you won't have to fight your way out of town as you fought it in. The rest of the party from Narshe shows up at the penthouse door — hey, folks, who's minding the store back in Narshe? — and you'll all troop together to the exit.

(Note: When you leave Zozo on your next visit, the exit won't be automatic, but departure from this building can be a bit smoother if you descend via the crane hook you'll spot beneath a landing. To use it, just stand at the edge of that landing and face south.)

Don't get too happy. This is another of those all-too-brief reunions. Decision time again: You have to pick the party for the next leg of the trip. Celes, the former imperial general, is a natural. Locke has volunteered. For the other spots, consider Edgar and Gau, who haven't had much of a turn at the wheel yet.

Remember, you not only want a good party, you ultimately want a balanced party. (If you're concerned they're not quite up to speed, check out the section on the clock puzzle below and explore Zozo some more. They'll come up a couple of levels in a hurry.)

Before you say good-bye to Zozo, talk to the ghost wandering near the exit for an explanation on how to use the Magicite shards containing the Espers' power. (Later in the game, the same ghost also appears in the school on the outskirts of Narshe.)

Start using the shards right away. They have two functions. When assigned to a character on the Skill screen, a shard will teach certain spells to that character. (Ramuh, for instance, teaches the Bolt, Bolt 2, and Poison spells.) In other words, you can gradually develop fighters like Cyan and Sabin into real wizards. It doesn't happen overnight; you'll need to win combats to learn the spells.

A nice side effect of many shards is that, when the character goes up a level, the character's basic stats will get an additional boost. (In Ramuh's case, it's one point of extra stamina.)

The shards also come in very handy in combat. To use an Esper here, select Magic in the menu



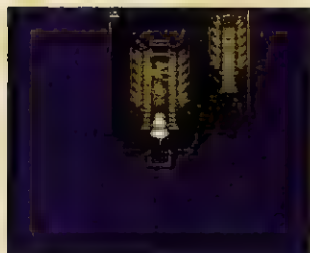
and then push Up on the controller. Ramuh launches a lightning-elemental attack, others confuse the enemy or restore HP, and some that become available later in the game will make even the most powerful enemies disintegrate. The Espers are your secret weapon.

The key is to “manage” your Espers well. Every member of the active party should be learning spells from a shard whenever possible. Check regularly on characters’ progress and switch shards once a character has learned the spells available on the current shard.

Don’t leave shards equipped on inactive party members, like the ones going back to Narshe now, unless all its spells have been learned by the active party. That’s just a waste because characters can’t learn spells unless they’re in combat. (But don’t worry; when you de-equip a shard, the character won’t lose any progress he or she has made toward learning the spells and will pick up at the same point when the shard is re-equipped.)

Frozen in Time: The Clock Puzzle

You’ve done everything you need to do in Zozo for the time being, but not everything you can do. There’s still the matter of that out-of-whack clock. You can save it for later in the game (you’ll be back), or pop back in now and tackle it.



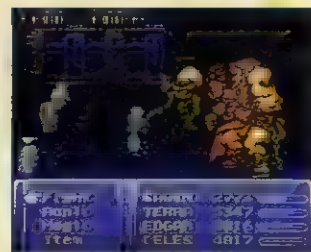
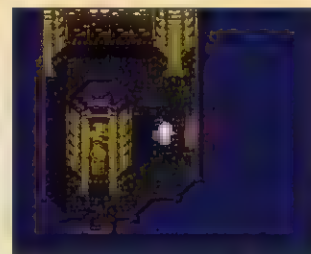
Unfortunately, the time’s not the only thing that’s messed up here. The first thing to understand in Zozo is that everybody is lying to you. Everybody. So when it comes time to try to play with the main clock — in the building west and north from the town entrance — it seems like the problem can be solved only by trial and error. That works, but it will take you a long time.

The correct answer is below. If you’d rather sort this out for yourself, the trick is to take all the “clues” you get from residents as wrong answers and cross them off your list. That really narrows down the range of possibilities.

OK, you have been warned. Don’t read any further if you don’t want us to reveal the answer. End of warning: the right time is 6 hours, 10 minutes, and 50 seconds. Once those figures are plugged in, that odd-looking segment of wall to the east will rise out of the way. Climb the hidden staircase to find Chainsaw — a enemy-erasing tool that can’t be found in any shop.

Try out the Chainsaw. It’s a gas to watch Edgar lug it around, sometimes in a hockey mask, and it’s a deadly weapon — with damage typically around 5,100 HP per strike.

Now you really are done with Zozo. . . for the time being.





Jidoor Redux

Time, finally, to head south into imperial territory. There are no ships bound for the southern continent, but the party supposes that someone in Jidoor may help. They're right, and that's the next stop. The irony of it is that the party is likely to return from the poor town of Zozo remarkably rich.

Don't expect to set out right away. Few things happen right away in FF3.

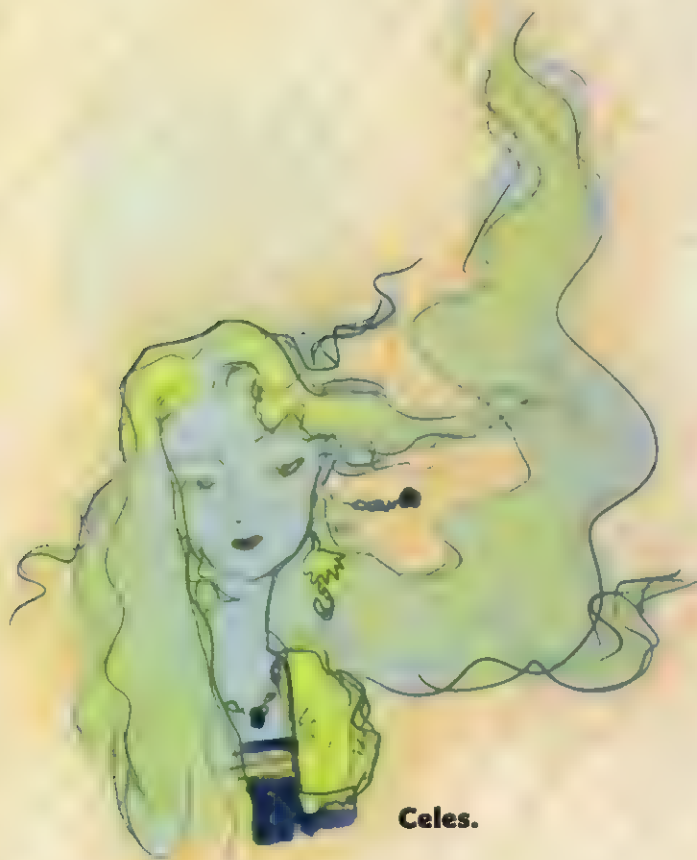
Your successes in Zozo have not ignited any fireworks back in Jidoor. Things are pretty much as you left them. Except, if you question the townsfolk closely, you'll now get some hints about an airship and a gambler who likes the opera.

Those two elements are related. Head for Owzer's House in the north, and you'll meet the opera's director, who's known as the Impresario. (No relation to the Impresario who manages the Phantom Train.) Like Owzer before him, he mistakes Celes for the opera singer Maria, and the poor flustered fellow runs off in a tizzy.

With some reason. Take a look at the letter on the floor in Owzer's foyer. (No, it's not nice to read other people's mail, but marriage proposals from strangers are an exception when the fate of the earth hangs in the balance.) Maria has a suitor named Setzer — owner of the world's only airship — who

wants her to marry him. . . only it doesn't sound as though she has much choice in the matter.

The party might be able to help the Impresario and grab a ride south to the southern continent at the same time. So after you've hit the Item Shop to restock your inventory with Potions and Fenix Downs, saddle up a Chocobo and head south.



Celes.

The Opera House

The opera's open for business this time, and the Impresario himself ushers you in. Locke offers that the party's seen the letter and proposes to grab Setzer when he makes his entrance. Tizzy No. 2 for the Impresario: If there's a scene during the show, he'll lose his job. He's torn between wanting a good performance and not wanting his star abducted.

And here Locke launches the real scheme. Celes will impersonate Maria. When she's abducted, Locke will follow them to the airship. The Impresario thinks that's great. Celes isn't so sure — she says something about "opera floozies" — but seems to see



the wisdom of the proposal, for she disappears to the north and the party can hear her, uh, rehearsing.

Every so often FF3 does something that's just out-and-out strange. Here's one. Complicating things is a plot to foil Locke's plan. The plot is conceived by, of all critters, Ultros — the octopus from the raft trip up the Lete — who intends to impersonate Setzer. In classic, taunting-villain style, he even drops a letter in the lobby saying he's going to gum up the works.

There's nothing you can do about this right now. Just sit back and enjoy the music. The whole performance is genuinely operatic and sounds great over stereo speakers, especially when the strings come up. Once the intro is complete, you'll have control over the party again. Well, Locke, at any rate, plus whoever else is in his party.

You can't really get backstage. The west exit from the balcony is locked, and the stairs off the east exit are blocked by an opera staffer. But all you really need to do at this stage is drop into the dressing room to see that Celes is OK. She looks lovely (watch Locke blush), and the two have a tender little moment before Celes focuses on the business at hand. Locke suggests she consult the musical score one last time, and here you're given control over the singing general.

S*inging a Proper Song*

The score is on the table behind Celes. Read it fully and follow it to the letter. You'll need to select the correct lines at the appropriate times and follow the stage directions without undue delay. Otherwise, the show closes and the party gets the boot. (Three boots, and the game's over. It's a long way to go without a save, so do it right the first time.)

The correct responses are:

"Oh, my hero. . ."

"I'm the darkness. . ."

"Must I. . .?"

When your co-star enters, walk to him. Speak to him (punch the "A" button) to set him in motion, then follow his movements across the stage, speaking to him after each pause to move to the next step. When he changes into a bunch of flowers, pick them up, walk all the way up both flights of stairs, and step onto the balcony to the left. You don't need to raise the flowers as the score instructs; that's automatic.

Well done. Back to Locke, who's watching from the wings. On the way out, pick up Ultros' threatening note and take it back to the Impresario. Naturally, he's going to freak, being a nervous sort of fellow. Fortunately, the party spots Ultros on the catwalks over the stage. The weight he's planning to drop on Celes is heavier than expected, and that gives the party five minutes to stop him, with no pauses for combat. (Say, what happened to the plot to impersonate Setzer?)

So, quickly, off you go, as the opera plunges ahead with a dance, a battle, and the reuniting of its separated lovers.

F*irst you'll need to clear the way. Exit to the upper right, climb the stairs, and speak to the opera staffer at the top. He'll tell you to throw the right-hand switch on the rear wall. This unlocks the left-hand backstage door. Retrace your steps past your seats and exit again, this time in the upper left, and go through the door in the rear wall.*



There's Ultros — at the top of a little catwalk maze. Walk to him quickly, avoiding combat as much as possible with the parties of vermin that live here. (Some of them are quite large, and the clock doesn't stop ticking while you fight.) You have time for about four such battles. Approach Ultros and speak to him; he'll charge you, and the four of you will plummet to the stage below.

Ordinarily, this would put a real crimp in the program, but the Impresario's an enterprising guy and incorporates it into the program. Locke's a quick study, if a hammy actor, and takes to the hero part readily. However, he's going to have to prove it, for old Ultros is still kicking (and still full of goofy lines). The fight shouldn't last long. Remember, you beat the octopus with ease about 10 levels back.



And here comes Setzer, right on schedule. He grabs Celes-as-Maria and, as predicted, takes her off to his airship. The scene shifts to the dirigible, and up pop Locke, Edgar, and Gau through a machinery well.

For the moment, at least, everything seems to be going according to plan.

Setzer is a gambler, rich man, and owner of the world's only airship. He at first seems a reluctant recruit.

FINAL FANTASY III

PART 3 IN THE ENEMY'S BACK YARD



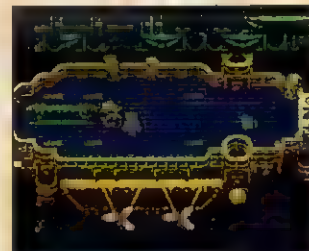
The Airship



Setzer doesn't seem like good Returner material. He's not so much greedy as unprincipled. The Empire made him rich, and he never seems to have considered that it might be evil. And so his offer to the party is a rather cold-hearted one: He'll help if Celes will marry him. (He tells her she's even more of a knockout than Maria.)

The scary part is that Celes seems ready to accept. Not to worry. She's got an old trick in mind: a flip of a coin with the same emblem on

each side — heads I win, tails I win. Setzer has been fooled, and knows it, but sticks to his bargain. The airship glides south across dark water into an orange horizon shot with searchlight beams. As land grows near, a great pyramidal form looms up: the Imperial Palace. The Empire's capital, Vector, is not far away.



Jackpot!

Setzer's Slot option may appear to be just a cute toy for a gambler character. But play it seriously for a while, trying to match up all the different types of matchups, and you'll begin to see a payoff. The Chocobop is cute one. (Chocobos run out into the playfield and bop your enemy.)

And at worst, you'll call up a Lagomorph who will heal your party a bit.

Albrook

The airship puts down just north of a south-coast port town called Albrook. It might as well be a hundred miles inland. Magitek troops block the docks. (Try to sneak by and see what happens.) Magitek troops flank the town entrance, and they promise hanging for disobedience. Imperial troopers have turned the cafe into a private club. (The troopers appear drunk as skunks — their response to everything is "No problem!" — and the women here won't even talk to you without evidence of imperial purple. The great boppin' jazz playing in the club, though!) There's been a lot of casual damage and neglect, and tradespeople here have to bribe troopers to permit them to do business.

And you thought Zozo was bad.

Perhaps it's also the firm pressure of the imperial thumb that keeps down the puzzle population. For Albrook is not so much a place for adventure as a place to get your feet wet in new terrain...and to shop. A passerby suggests Tzen and Maranda as good places for weapons and items, but you'll find Epees for Celes and Edgar at the Weapon Shop right here, Warp Stone in the Item Shop, Amulet

(protection against Poison, Dark, and Zombie) at Relics, and Bard's Hat at the Armor Shop. (If you can afford it, also pick up an Epee for Terra, a Poison Claw for Sabin, and a Blossom for Shadow.)

Actually, the single most interesting element in Albrook is the street gossip. A scholar at the east end of town will tell you that monsters on the southern continent have weaker magic. You'll learn that Vector is in the center of the continent, which would place it northwest of your present location.

Two hints are especially important. At the Weapon Shop, a customer will pass on a fascinating story about a pair of Atma weapons from the War of the Magi. And you'll hear about an imperial base somewhere to the east. Something valuable has been found there. (The last time you found an imperial base, it was launching the assault on Doma Castle, so you can bet it's something important.)

The question now is: Where to? Not east. The only thing you're likely to find there is that imperial base, and you're not ready. (Even if you're successful in combat, you just get kicked out.)

You could head northwest, through the opening in the mountains, to reach Vector, seat of the imperial government and home to the giant Magitek Factory and Research Center.

But you may not be strong enough yet, either in experience or in weapons, for the rough combat in this part of the game. A better but more round-about path is a western one that will take you to the town of Maranda or a northern one to Tzen. Or both. Either will give you plenty of lower-grade combats to build experience for the mission into Vector, as well as access to better weapons.

On to Maranda

To reach Maranda, follow the coast west. Once you clear the mountains, head south. This will take you down the southwestern peninsula. At length, you'll see a grove of trees, and, just to the south of it, the town.

There's one familiar name here: Lola, the girlfriend of the wounded soldier in Mobliz. She's received his letter (thanks to you!). The party's involvement in this romance is far from over.

But the same imperial plague that fouled Albrook has infected Maranda as well. The troopers here are running wild. They're betting on dogfights at the center of town, and, down on the docks, one's chasing a woman in a circle, "Pirates of the Caribbean"-style — though once you chat with them, it's hard to judge who's chasing whom!

The shops haven't been touched, though, and this is the real reason for the detour. Here, for the first time, you'll find Mithril Helm and Mithril Mail. Buy both and in quantity. (Some of the folks back in Narshe can use it as well.)

However, that's basically all there is to see here. Maranda's not much more than a hole in the wall. Time to make your way northeast toward Vector.



Vector

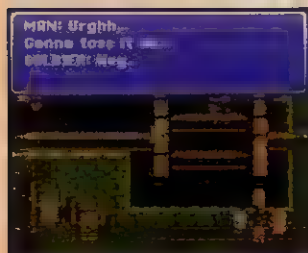
Grimy and grim, with bare steel beams everywhere, the Empire's capital leaves the impression of an assembly line — a city always under construction.

You'll be able to dispense with the city proper quickly. The shops contain nothing you haven't seen before. (It would be a bit too convenient to have the tools of the Empire's undoing so close at hand, wouldn't it?) Many of the people are either unpleasant or simply on the other side of the political fence from your little band.

However, interestingly enough, there are any number of ways to get healed for free in the city:

- A stay at the Inn opposite the entrance is “on the house,” and it's not some imperial trick where masked men wake you up in the middle of the night and put lit matches to the soles of your feet. While you're there, you can pop into the private room to the east and overhear some anti-imperial pillowtalk.
- The blond child wandering with his mother in the west side of town can cure the whole party, but only one HP at a time. (He's just a little boy, after all.)
- Strangest of all is the grandmotherly woman in an outhouse-sized shack just west of the city entrance. She'll ask if you pledge allegiance to the Empire. If you don't — let's not be hypocrites, OK? — two pathetic soldiers appear and fight with you. Talk to her again afterward, and she'll urge you to “hang in there” and restore the party's HP and MP. The Empire is not well-loved here any more than it is in the north. Allies surface in the strangest places.

Not to the north, though. That way lies the Emperor Gestahl's palace. Ignore it for now. The Guardian boss that covers the entrance is an extremely tough cookie, and none of your weapons can put a dent in it. To the east, however, lies the target of your mission: the Magitek Factory and, beyond it, the Magitek Research Center.



The guards on the entrance path are firm: No entry. Not without some help. Backpedal west a bit and talk to the man standing beside the crates. He'll reveal himself as a Returner sympathizer and agree to create a distraction that will allow you to enter the compound. The nausea he feigns is enjoyably corny — “gonna toss it all. . .” — but it's enough. Just step up to the crate as instructed, and it's done. Head north into the Magitek Factory. (Don't go back to help the man; the guards will attack and you'll have to hot-foot it back to the city entrance and start over again.)

Magitek Factory

The factory is one big mechanical toy, and getting through it (or simply watching it), to the accompaniment of Beatles-like trumpet flourishes, is one of the most pleasant chores in the first half of the game.

Head down the two flights of stairs, then south across the bridge. You'll see two closed pipes south of you. Try the right-hand one anyway — the ends open — and crawl through to get Tincture from the chest at the other end. Then crawl north through the pipe again, walk to the west end of the platform, and, when the crane hook draws close, push the A button to give a little hop.

Ride the crane west and drop off at the other end. Get the Flame Sabre from the chest here. (You can also get here via the pipe and roller belt to the north.) The use of this spell-endowed sword is often accompanied by a Fire spell, and you'll want one of your fighters to equip it pronto.

Now, head east again and enter the left-hand pipe. This one will take you down a roller belt, under the areas you've already visited, to a new platform where you can pick up X-Potion. (In case you didn't get the Flame Sabre, you can backtrack using the tube to the north and then the elevator.) Head east down another roller-belt to two more chests, where you'll find ThunderBlade and Remedy. Have your other main fighter equip ThunderBlade.

The roller-belt to the west will wind up taking you south into a new area with several directions to follow up. Don't be hasty and jump on the next belt. Instead, head southwest and get the Dragoon Boots from the chest south of the stairs. (This relic will permit the bearer to Jump instead of Fight in combat). Up the stairs and through the door to the north, you'll find another chest — this one containing Gold Shield (another must-equip item).

You can find more. Tent is available on a catwalk far to the southeast, but you'll face a plague of bothersome Pipsqueaks while getting there. (If you're in the mood for sightseeing, however, just to the south you can see Magitek armor rolling off the line.)

Get on the east-bound roller belt, and you'll be dumped into a new area where you'll hear Kefka's whooping laugh. He's talking himself up, as usual, but he'll let drop one creepy hint about restoring the "statues." (You won't be able to sort this out for some time.) You'll also see him abusing some used-up Espers and booting their butts into a garbage bin.

There's simply nothing nice about this guy.

You'll have to follow those Espers, for the bin is the way into the Research Center.

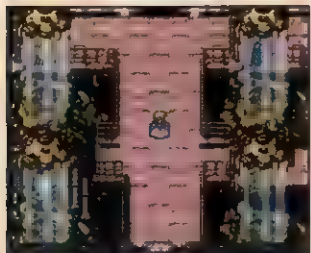
Just hop on the rollers and drop down into the pit. If you change your mind, grab the crane hook and you'll be lifted out again. Enter the left-hand door — finally, a save point! — and save your game. Then talk to Ifrit, the Esper at the left end of the chamber. Ifrit and Shiva (who's blocking the right-hand door) don't yet know you're an ally of the Espers and will attack you a number of times before they sense a "kindred spirit."

You can make that impression faster if you limit your attacks to magic and your Drill tool. (Other weapons appear only to increase the Espers' HP.) They'll follow Ramuh's lead and turn themselves into Magicite. Put 'em to work straight away, as they're both good in combat, and leave by the right-hand door. Take the stairs all the way to the top — six flights; the garbage bin is very deep — and exit into the Research Center.



Research Center

You've made it to your destination! Head left down this hall, full of empty glass tubes, using Drill on any Rhinoxes you meet here. (It's about the only thing that works consistently on these creatures. The effect of other weapons is unpredictable.) At the end of the hall, bear north and bring deadly force to bear on the "boss" who guards the northern exit, named Number 024. (What, did you guys run out of good monster names?) Celes by now should have command of the Ice 2 spell, and, in combination with Drill, you'll whittle down 024's 4,000 or so HP in nothing flat. Enter, and hold your breath.



Espers enclosed in giant glass tubes line this great north-south hall. This is where the draining is taking place, and this is what you have come to stop. Head for the controls at the north end of the hall. When you use them, the Espers here will give themselves to you as well. . . with the unfortunate side effect that the Empire learns how Esper power is truly transferred. Cid, the scientist who runs the factory, watches the transformation. And Kefka's on his way.

Whoo-boy. How are you going to get out of this one?

Just sit back and see what happens. Cid asks whether it's true that Celes has come to foment rebellion. (Hey, that's not a bad idea.) Locke somehow reads this as meaning Celes is really working for the Empire — a suggestion endorsed by Kefka's orders to her to turn over the shards. (The more you see of Locke, the weirder he gets.)

While Locke pops his eyes and Celes sulks, Kefka, impatient, orders his men to wipe them out, and two very large Magitek troops charge the party. The screen goes glassy. It's like everyone's just semi-consciousness.

Oh, Locke, you are a man of little faith. This time, it's Celes who does the saving. She raises her arms. There's an explosion of light. When the glassiness clears, the very large troops and Kefka are gone, and, with them, Celes. No time for pondering the whys and wherefores: The fighting has damaged the Esper tubes, and they're coming apart. Follow Cid right to the elevator and listen to him on the way down. He realizes he's been used, and says he's

Cid is a Magitek scientist and Returner sympathizer who was like a father to Celes as she grew up. In the second half of FF3, he'll be more like her grandfather.



going to talk to Gestahl to stop the war. (Don't you just love these sudden changes of heart in the presence of heavily-armed warriors?)

At the bottom, use the save point at the left, then talk to Cid again. He starts in about Celes — how he's been like a father to her — but there's Kefka's whoop in the distance, and it's time to run again. Cid packs you off in a mine cart, and soon you're zipping down a tunnel through the factory in a 3-D sequence like something out of "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom."

The branches in the track are just for show, so don't worry about steering as you did in the underwater escape from Mobliz. You'll face about a half-dozen combats with purple blobs. Most of them are easy and good opportunities for stealing — uh, that is, "treasure-hunting" — Edge weapons. Only the last fight, against a two-bladed. . . well, something. . . called Number 124 is at all threatening, and the old standby Drill will do nicely here even without Celes's magic.

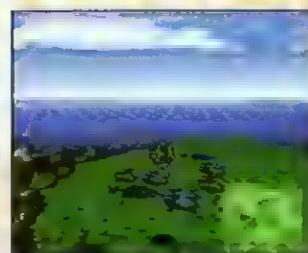
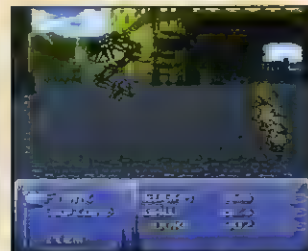
Heal the party, save once more when the ride ends outside the entrance to the Magitek Factory, and head for the exit. You'll face one more nasty combat with the Chaser and the three Trappers that follow. (Drills all around for these guys.) The guards seem to have vanished. Setzer will meet you at the exit, and you'll all hustle off together to the airship. (Before he joins you, you can pop back into the factory, too, but why would you? It's shuddering under the impact of the damage in the Research Center.)

Not so fast, my pretties. Not as long as Kefka's still around. The airship's deck is increasingly in shadow. Cranes (would those be "whooping" cranes?) have erupted from the imperial citadel and are attacking from both sides of the airship. You should be strong enough by now that they won't present much of a problem. Drill and drill again. Setzer, who joins the party automatically, has some pretty dazzling combat abilities of his own (and a "Slot" option that calls up a slot machine). Make a note to check out his Status screen at first opportunity.

You've escaped. The airship does a little dance of celebration, and you'll hear music that sounds like it comes from a "Let's Visit Hawaii!" travelogue. Go north, again, and home.

Zozo and Onward

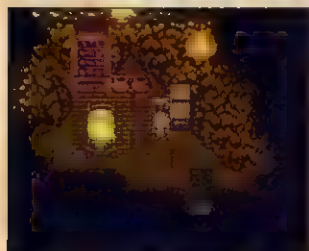
Locke's worried about Terra again, so Zozo's the first stop. The whole party's there (evidently Narshe's not all that important), and in the presence of the Magicite shard, Terra finally responds with something other than a shriek or a fit. She says, "Father?" And her memory returns, taking us to the Esper World.





The Esper World

Unlike many of FF3's dream and memory sequences, this one is semi-interactive. You control the Esper Maduin, who controls the gate between the human and Esper worlds. On a night of strong winds and ill omens, a human woman comes through the portal to the north of his cave.



The Esper World is about as large as a small village, and you don't need to deal with inventory or shops here. But once you reach the gate, the story will proceed, so this might be a good time to explore and get the lay of the land. There are four or five caves apart from your own; lots of pretty, forested terrain; and a good number of Espers willing to engage in chinwag. When you're done, visit the mouth of the cave, talk to the woman, choose the option to bring her back, and then speak to her (she's in bed) when the scene shifts to the cave. She's a bit ill-mannered, first asking about Maduin's

pendant (which he gives to her) and then suggesting that coming here somehow represents "the low road."

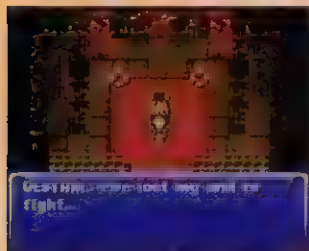
Nice woman. "Hello. Hey, what's with the jewelry?"

The Espers aren't the most gracious of hosts. Apart from Maduin, who lived among humans for a time, they are suspicious of them. One even suggests Maduin should "do her in." The girl seems to understand this, for she says she'll return to her world the next day. Maduin volunteers to guide her. The moment is vaguely romantic, and you can bet the village Elder, who's looking on from a distance, knows it.

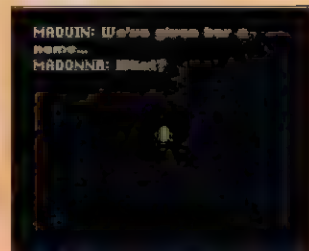
Incidentally, get this: The woman's name is Madonna. Seriously. (And you thought you'd heard all the stories about Madonna. I can see the Enquirer cover now: "Madonna's Secret Alien Lovechild.")

But when Maduin wakes the next day, he hears she's already left. It's almost true. He intercepts her in front of the gate and tells her she can stay if she wishes. She protests that Espers and humans can't get along, and he asks how they can know this...unless they see for themselves. They see for themselves. They dance in the darkness, amid shafts of light, and their stars are joined. It's more than romantic. It's love, or something like it, and the child born to the human woman and the male Esper is named Terra. She's just a dot on the screen here. The green hair comes later.

Time passes. Two years later, on another windy night, the gate opens again — and imperial troopers come through, with Gestahl at their heels. The emperor has found what he had so sought — a source of magic. Troopers, egged on by Gestahl's promise of money, drag Espers back through the gate. They will soon be at Maduin's door.



Speak to the Elder. In desperation, he decides to create a storm that will throw the humans out and a barrier that will keep them out. He leaves. Try the door. The remaining Esper will get up and angrily blame Madonna. She must overhear, for she runs out with Terra and heads for the gate. And try as Maduin might to keep her in the Esper

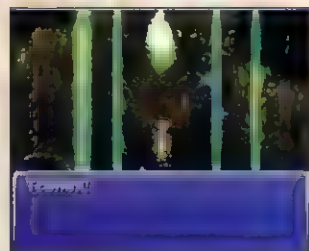


World, the same tempest that sends the shrieking Gestahl back to the human world takes the little family with it.

They land with Gestahl in what appears to be the recovery spring in the Phantom Forest. Gestahl realizes the baby Terra is a priceless prize, strikes down the mother, and takes off.

No further mention is made of Madonna.

And Maduin? It's his Magicite shard that has brought Terra back to herself — her hair's back to its normal green color — and given her the ability to control her powers. Great things lie ahead.



The Airship

You really should be heading back to Narshe, as Locke suggests, but you've just been given a huge gift — freedom of action — and, like most people who receive huge gifts, you'll want to put it to use immediately. Up to this point, the party hasn't really had a proper base of operations. Oh, sure, Narshe could be classified that way, but it was really just the place for the rest of the party to hang out while you're doing your thing.

Well, the airship becomes your mobile base, and you can go virtually anywhere you please. It can take you to most game locations in seconds. The world of FF3 has become your oyster.

The airship itself is as large as some towns, but a lot of it is non-functional eye candy. You may find a few places useful. At the base of the stairs down from the flight deck is a sort of hat-check stand. Here you can unequip everyone, or just those members not in the party — a very useful tool for quick realignments with limited weapons. Another flight down, on the lower level of the casino, you'll find the inactive party members milling about. Talk to them to change party members; hey, talk to them just for the time of day. (They'll just make conversation, but it's usually relevant conversation.)

The airship is also a sort of airborne hospital. The door to the south leads to two healing shops — the left one for on-the-spot repairs, the right one for items. And the south door out of this room would appear to be the exit. It doesn't seem to have any use. You'll find one before too long.

So let's take this bird out for a spin. Where to first? Are there any loose ends we should be trying to tie up? Heh, in the first half of the game, always! One of the issues in playing games of this scope is whether you should trek across two continents to see whether a recent Significant Event has changed the landscape or the way people respond to you. Traveling on foot makes it prohibitive. The airship makes it easy.

We'll be in Narshe soon enough, so let's leave that city for then. Consider this a whirlwind world tour — some of it useful, some of it just fun.

- First off, fair warning: The place you'll most want to visit at this point — and the only one it's really impractical to visit — is that imperial base in the eastern part of the south continent. Soon, friends, soon, but not quite yet.
- A visit to Kohlingen will find that Shadow's left the cafe. And remember the odd man you heard about here who lives to the north and wants to build a colosseum? Now that you're better

equipped to see the big picture, you can find him easily. His little blue house does indeed lie north of Kohlingen, on a peninsula that begins east of that city. He has some nutty ideas about war and peace, and he intends the stadium as a monument to war — provided he gets help to finish it. Well, if you want money for people with minds that hate, all I can tell you is, brother, you'll have to wait. Do, however, take the Hero Ring relic from one of the pots. It's a good one, raising magic and battle damage meted out in fights.

- Drop by Figaro Castle again. There are lots of little changes here. If Edgar's still in the active party, he'll get lots of "welcome backs" from his retainers. (Try to buy something in the shops.) One of the cells in the dungeon is now empty, which sets up a scene later in the game. The castle's two wings are open again, and the hyperactive girl in the west wing has changed her tune a bit on Edgar.

And, again, if Edgar's around, there's also one very funny bit in the dormitory. (You can also ask the engine room chief again to take the castle back to its original position in the eastern desert. Just remember: Your airship is in the western desert, and there's no other way to get past those mountains.)

- In Jidoor, the auction (which had ended when you last visited) is about the start again. Talk to the man beside the door, choose "Bid," and you'll automatically take a seat. This may depend on the timing of your



Edgar.



visit, but if you've followed this path pretty closely, the sole item up for grabs today is the relic Cherub Down (which casts Float). You can get it, but someone else wants it as well, and in the bidding war that follows, it'll cost you 10,000 GP. You should be able to handle that. (It's worth dropping in here from time to time.)

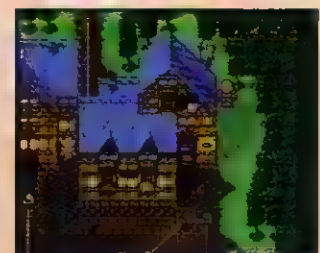
- Zozo remains as fierce and impenetrable as ever. But you'll now recognize the odd figure in front of the clock building. It appears to be Madonna. (At any rate, it's the same graphic used when Maduin found her at the gate upon arrival in the Esper World, and when Gestahl punched her out in the spring on her return.)
- South Figaro is still shut tight as a drum. You can't enter from the landward side — the way is blocked by troops — but, if you haven't done so already, you can grab Tonic from the northernmost barrel beside the Chocobo stable and a Green Cherry at the end of the hidden lane behind it. You can reach the docks by ship from Nikeah, but the captain is worried about all the imperial troops milling about and smuggles you to the east end of town in a chest, and you'll automatically exit to the countryside. Nice try, anyway.
- The Returners' hideout, recently occupied by imperial troops, has somehow shaken off the yoke. You can make small talk with the handful of residents, who are glad to see you're OK and ask after Banon. Mt. Kolts, to the south, is also trooper-free now, but has nothing to offer save some piddling combats; the resultant experience points won't compensate for the battles' annoying frequency. Skip it.
- Far off to the east, in Mobliz, the soldier has received another letter from Lola. It's kind of depressing. She went to play his favorite record, so he would be with her in spirit, but couldn't find it. The soldier says he'd give her everything, if only he could move. This guy badly needs a friend.

Go back to the delivery service (the building with the pigeons, just to the east) and pay 500 GP to send a record. Again, you've boosted his spirits. Nice work! (Now you have a reason to go back to Maranda and check with Lola to see that the record's arrived. She's tickled.)

Sraphim for Sale Cheap!

As in real life, if you wait to buy, you can sometimes save money. Consider the Magicite shard Sraphim that can be found in the woods in the northeast corner of Tzen. You can spend 3,000 GP now and be the first kid on the block to have one. Or you can wait until the second half of the game and pick it up for a mere 10 GP. Talk about marking down merchandise!

- If you revisit Albroom and speak to a fellow in the south-central part of town, you'll learn of someone who was trying to sell glowing stones, and, when turned down, headed for Tzen. Those stones have to be a Magicite shard. Head for Tzen. Walk to the woods in the northeast corner of town, and you'll see a flicker of movement behind the trees. This is your man; he evidently made the best of the chaos the party wrought in the Research Center, and made off with a left-over Magicite shard. His price is high, but the reward is great; Sraphim is among the strongest Espers you've seen so far.
- You'll also pick up some interesting odds and ends of info in Tzen, which doesn't seem as crushed by the imperial presence as other





communities. (Nothing much doing in the shops once you've seen Maranda, though.) In the northern part of town, you'll get tipped off to the presence of a huge gate in a cave to the east. (That sounds very like the portal to the Esper World.) You'll also be warned off the Guardian in Gestahl's palace — which you'll discover, if you're reckless or foolish enough to visit Vector again, is now policing the front entrance. The best move is simply to run. The Guardian is not adventurer-friendly.

- If you keep an eye peeled, you'll also run across a place you've never seen before. Thamasa is a good-sized village on the northern end of Crescent Island, just off the eastern end of the northern continent. If you think Espers are suspicious of strangers, get a load of these folks: They're so suspicious, they're inarticulate. No one will say anything of consequence to you. Some won't say anything more than "..."

The innkeeper talks, though. He tells you a bed will cost 1,500 GP per night.

Thanks. Thanks a lot.

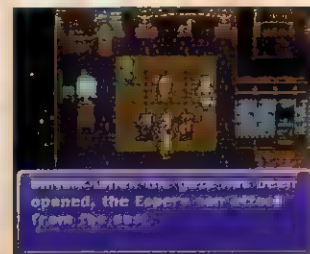
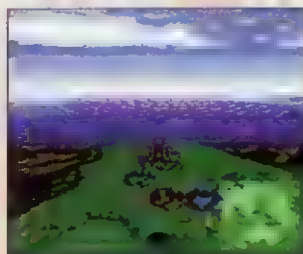
(Actually, the people here have a lot more in common with Espers have you might imagine. And you'll be seeing them again real soon.)

Narshe

OK, you've had your fun, but the only destination that will kick the story along now is Narshe. It should be easy enough to find from the air. There, you'll be greeted at the entrance and escorted to consult with Banon, Arvis, and Narshe's Elder.

The good news: Narshe's people have decided to fight. The bad news is that the manpower to carry out the projected assault on the Empire — using Narshe's money and Figaro's machinery — just isn't there.

You need the Espers' help, and that means opening the sealed gate to the Esper World. One person is uniquely qualified to build such a bridge: Terra. Once again, as always, it comes back to Terra.



FINAL FANTASY III



PART 4 OF ESPERS AND TREACHERY



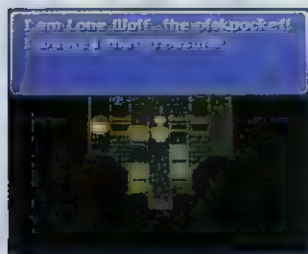
Narshe

We took a nice little tour the last time we were in Narshe, but things have changed. It's time to make the rounds again.

Of course, you'll find that some of the residents are spouting the same old stuff they've been offering since Day One. But some things have changed: someone you meet will offer a bit of useful advice, another will suggest that a loose end is suddenly dangling within reach, and still others will cast new light on old info.

Let's take care of the loose end first. The owner of the warehouse up on the mountainside to the east says a famous thief is in town, and he wants to know if his treasures are OK. Of course, they're not. We took six of them, remember? This guy invited us to take them!

But the presence of the thief, named Lone Wolf, should cast your mind back to the locked seventh chest in the warehouse corner. You couldn't open it, but a famous thief might. Get up there and protect your interests!



Ah, too late. Lone Wolf's already here, and in two flicks of a wolf's tail, he's gone. The chest, the chest! Empty! Arghh! After that wolf! There he is, off to the north, hopping down the cliff and taking off through Narshe's streets. And by the time you amble back north and down three flights of stairs, he's out of sight.

This isn't a small town; he could be anywhere. Maybe we should just leave, eh?

Don't you dare. Think a sec. Where would you go to hide in a mining town? The mine! And sure enough, once you set off up the main street toward the mine, Lone Wolf appears briefly ahead of you. He appears again at the mine entrance.

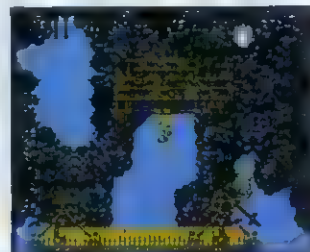
But wait. Forget about Lone Wolf for a moment. What in tarnation is that white thing peering at us out of the cliff face? The town drunk has been carrying on all through the game about Moogles and Sasquatch walking together, and you may have passed it off as raving. Well, if you ask around town now, he's not the only one seeing the Bigfoot, and now you've seen something with your own eyes.

However, you're still not able to reach him yet, and, besides, you've got a more immediate problem.

If you explored the mine after the Empire's defeat and checked out some of the doors that opened up, you already know how to reach the plateau where you just spotted Lone Wolf.

Head north into the mine, east at the first junction, and from here on there's but one path to follow — up, up, through the battleground where you defended Banon against Kefka's men to the pinnacle where the frozen Esper still sits.

Lone Wolf's Gold Hairpin relic must be really something. (It cuts in half the number of MP used to cast spells.) Lone Wolf is so desperate to keep it that he even takes a Moogle hostage. It's the wrong Moogle, though. The fierce little critter breaks away from him with a force that hurls both captor and captive to the brink.

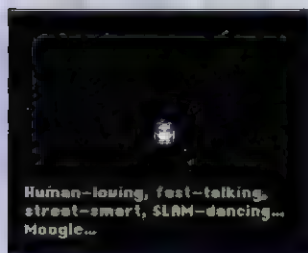


K_{upo!}

Now, suppose you got greedy and made for the Hairpin. . . and left little Mog to dangle in the wind? Now you're all full of regrets, right?

Well, don't go getting a broken heart over it. You'll still be able to sign Mog up — but only in the second half of the game, when you'll find him, face to the wall, in the Moogle section of the Narshe mines. However, he'll still have only one Dance to his credit. It's much better to get him early on.

And that presents you with a Hairpin curve: Do you go for the Gold, or save an innocent's life? Well, you might just find another Gold Hairpin (or two) later in the game, but another talking Moogle like Mog, with instructions from Ramuh, probably would be hard to replace. Pick Mog — if you don't, he's history — and let Lone Wolf take the plunge off the cliff with his treasure.



Mog is one of the Moogles who lives in Narshe's mines. The Siamese cat-like cuties only say "Kupo!", and this little guy joins you when you save his life. Specialty: Dance!



Mog's Dances

Mog doesn't say much, but the little guy sure can slam-dance up a storm. In fact, several entirely different storms. The chart below outlines each of his eight Dance techniques and their effects.

Note that when a Dance is selected, you're stuck with it for the entire battle — unless Mog stumbles while taking his little steps. If that happens, you can pick a Dance again.

Dance	Result	Effect
Wind Song	Plasma	Lightning-elemental attack
	Sun Bath	Heals party
	Wind Slash	Wind attack
	Cokatrice	Turns enemy to stone
Forest Suite	Wild Bear	Recovers party status
	Elf Fire	Fire attack
	Rage	Attacks enemies
	Wombat	Damages a single enemy
Desert Aria	Sand Storm	Wind attack
	Antlion	Opens hole under enemy
	Wind Slash	Wind attack
	Kitty	Casts Haste on party
Love Sonata	Specter	Ghostly fire attack
	Elf Fire	Fire attack on enemy
	Snare	Opens hole under enemy
	Tapir	Recovers party status
Water Rondo	El Nino	Water-elemental attack
	Specter	Confuses enemies
	Plasma	Lightning-elemental attack
	Wild Bear	Recovers party status
Earth Blues	Landslide	Rocks fall on enemy
	Sun Bath	Heals party
	Sonic Boom	Similar to Wind Slash
	Whump	Animal attack on enemy
Dusk Requiem	Cave In	Drops boulders on an enemy
	Elf Fire	Fire attack
	Snare	Tries to open hole under enemy
	Poison Frog	Poison attack
Snowman Jazz	Ice Rabbit	Heals character
	Snare	Tries to open hole under enemy
	Snowball	Pummels enemy with snowballs
	Surge	Wave of snow attacks enemy



While we're in the mine, let's take advantage of the situation and make a few quick bucks.

You may have noticed that, with your advanced condition, combats in this part of the world tend to be very short and low in GP yield. With weapon prices being what they are, you can't equip your party of four with what you earn from the hides of Repo Men and Were-Rats.

You could always fly to the southern continent and start fights with the coastal monsters, but that's a rather long haul — especially if it's only for a few hundred GP.

Let the Empire make the money for you. You heard right. Remember the roving light that served as a security device in the western part of the mine? Head back to that cave. Sure enough, it was left behind, and it's still policing the passageways. This time, choose your own path through the cave. The light will box you in, and you'll face combat with as many as a half-dozen of the mine's strongest critters. They're now weaklings compared to your hardy band, and the post-combat reward might be as much as 600 to 700 GP. Repeat as often as you'd like.

Ah, but what should you spend your hard-won GP on? If you asked around Narshe, you've already been tipped to the presence of tougher weapons for the impending struggle. The Weapon Shop now offers the very expensive (6,000 GP) Hawkeye for Locke; Blossom for Shadow, when that brat shows his face again; a Trident for Mog; and Morningstars for Terra and Celes.

Celes? You mean she's still around? Oh, didn't you notice? Celes is still on the party roster — meaning she didn't buy the farm in that business back at the Research Center. It'll be some time before she shows up, however, and a longer time before she returns to the party.

The Armor Shop is offering a whole bunch of good equipment, including the Gold Shield and Helmet and the Power Sash at 5,000 GP.

Put in at the Item Shop, as well, and stock up on Green Cherries. (This will restore any party members who are turned into imps, as will happen in the earlier portion of the caves. The imp faces are cute, though!)

It's Not Easy Being Green

Imps have it rough. They can't cast spells (except Imp) and they've got the stats of a big rat. But put an imp in Imp Armor, with a Tortoise Shield, Titanium and a couple of Imp Halberds, and you've got a little green superhero.

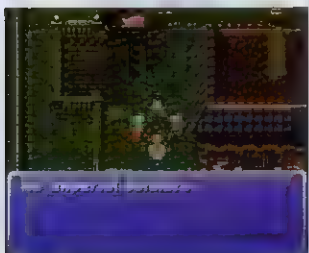
And this might also be a good time to optimize all of your characters, comb through your inventory, and sell whatever old equipment you can. (For instance, the Flame Sabre and ThunderBlade may have outlived their usefulness by now.)

Imperial Base

That should do it. It's time to try and build a bridge with the Espers. Head back to the airship, take flight, and bear for the southern continent. Using Albrook on the south coast as a reference point, fly east until you come to a channel. Then bear north. You'll quickly come upon an opening in the



mountains to the west, a small settlement (the imperial base), and a bridge leading east. Put down just west of the settlement.

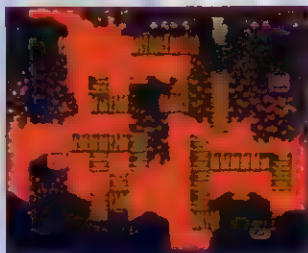
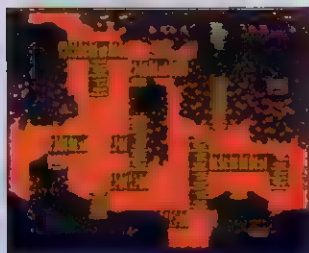


Have a look at the party before you disembark. There are a couple of considerations here. You must have Terra in the active party to get through the imperial base just to the east. And you should check the members' levels to see if any big differences exist. Try using the weaker characters first. (This will depend on how you play the game, of course, but Setzer's an especially good candidate, as we'll see later.) This dungeon is a tough one, and the members of your party will rapidly gain experience. Leave the ship and head east into the base.

Well, this is odd. Very odd. If you dropped in here earlier, you found the place crowded with troops. Now it's quiet as a grave, without a trooper in sight. Knowing what you do about Kefka and Gestahl, you could be forgiven for smelling a trap and getting out. But this is the only avenue of approach at the moment, so let's grin and bear it. Explore.

Well, OK, don't explore, then. There's really not much to see, is there? The lone building is empty, and the treasure room in the basement is locked. That leaves only the stairway in the northwest corner, which in turn leads east and then south to the eastern exit from the base. This takes you out into the open air. Cross the bridge, save your game, and walk into the mountains to the east, and you'll reach a hidden cave.

Cave to the Sealed Gate



Open the chest to the east to receive the Assassin dirk, then head south into Basement 1 and collect the Tempest knife from the chest to the west. (If Cyan's in the party, he'll be able to use this.) Head south again via the eastern stairs into Basement 2 and a whole heap of trouble.

Basement 2

Basement 2 is a lava pool with five major land masses and chests in two corners — all connected by wooden bridges that are a bit on the unstable side.

They all have sections that alternately appear and disappear. If a section disappears while the party's on it, everyone gets scalded by the lava, and the party takes damage and is dumped back in the northwest corner to try again.

HP are especially valuable here, and you can't afford to waste them. The trick, naturally, is to keep your eyes open and watch the bridge changes — they're always the same — before you make any moves. Carefully chart the shortest, most direct courses among the land masses. Along the way, you should be able to sample all the chests.



Here's the proper path:

- 1) When the bridge leading east off the northwest land mass appears, follow it quickly to the end and continue pressing right on the control pad. That way, when the switch of bridge sections comes, you'll walk right off the vanished portion onto the new section. Walk east onto the northeast land mass and get X-Potion from the chest.
- 2) Ignore the bridges to the south. (There are two, appearing separately in different positions.) They're a trap to lure a hasty party south toward the exit. You'll only get dumped in the lava.
- 3) Instead, head west onto the bridge you just crossed. Go only as far as the second full square from the right, and then turn south and continue pushing south on the control pad. Again, this will permit you to walk off one section as it vanishes and onto another as it appears. Quickly walk west and south on the central land mass.
- 4) Now, be careful here, for the layout is a bit tricky. The westbound bridge in the southwest corner of this central island is used only to get to the chest in the southwest. (It may not look like it, but the chest is on a little island of its own and can't be reached from the southwestern land mass.) When this bridge appears, walk all the way to the west end and continue pressing west on the control pad. That way, you'll immediately walk onto the square of bridge that will appear to the west when the switch occurs. Quickly turn south and get the Coin Toss relic from the chest, then walk back one square to the east. When the bridge appears to the east, walk quickly back to the central island.
- 5) Just two more maneuvers! Now we'll use the bridge leading south from the central land mass. When it appears, quickly move all the way south, and then one square to the left. This square shifts its orientation (from north-south to east-west) with the change of bridges, but there's always a platform under you, and you can wait here safely. When a platform appears south of you, quickly walk south, then west, onto the southwestern land mass.
- 6) The last part is the easiest. An eastbound bridge will appear at the east side of the southwestern land mass. Follow it across and continue pressing east on the control pad, which will permit you to walk onto the new section when it appears to the east. Head south through the exit into Basement 3.

Basement 3

Now that you're back in a combat situation, take a moment to equip Setzer with the Coin Toss relic. This has the wonderful effect of converting his Slot option into GP Rain — a hail of gold pieces that can do an enormous amount of damage to each targeted enemy. Use this ability in tight spots — you'll need to make up for the absence of Terra's combat spells. (Oh, she can cast Fire spells, all right, but these creatures live around lava, and they'll eat up her Fire 2s as if they were Cure 2s.) For the same reason, have Sabin stick to Blitz and avoid using Fire Knuckle here.

However, if you want to come back from the gate with any money to show for it, use GP Rain only in emergencies. Those GP have to come from somewhere, and that somewhere is your purse.

Basement 3 is large, and it's a bit confusing. You'll need to avoid impulsive moves and check out



alternative routes before you commit to a course of action. Take it slow and steady, and you'll be fine.

First things first, though. There's a chest containing Ether just to the southeast. Go get it, and then make your way back to the entrance and bear south along the path to the tunnel.

When you come out again, you'll be presented with three paths. The north and center are fruitless dead ends — though you may look wistfully after the chest on the inaccessible island to the north. (We'll get to it in a second.)

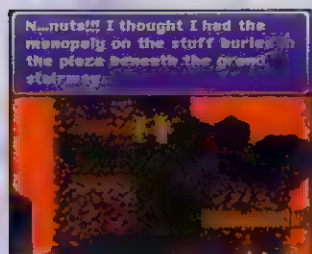


But the southern route will take you up a hill and across a bridge. At mid-bridge, you'll find a lever against the northern cliff. Use it, and the party will take a tumble to a lower level (but, happily, stay clear of the lava).

Don't worry, you did the right thing. You'll hear a crash in the distance, and if you follow the path leading northwest, you'll see it was the missing bridge to the island falling into place. Go get the chest on the island. It contains the Genji Glove relic, which should ring a bell from earlier in the game. (It permits the bearer to equip a weapon in each hand.)

OK, head back south, past the spot where the party fell, and climb the stairs to the east. Against the northern cliff, you'll find two levers. The right-hand one will bring a ninja down on your necks. He's good for only about 2,000 HP, after which point he'll quit with a stammered reference to "the stuff buried in the plaza beneath the grand stairway."

What the blazes are you talking about, Ninja man? Plaza? Grand Stairway? That sounds like a reference to Vector, or maybe Jidoor. Guess again: He's talking about the treasure room back in the basement at the imperial base. You still can't get in there, but the message here seems to be that eventually you will.



The left-hand lever opens up a door between the levers. Inside, you'll find a single room with a chest containing a Tent and (oh, happy day!) a save point. (You wouldn't want to go through that bridge room again.) Save your game and take a breather. You've earned it.

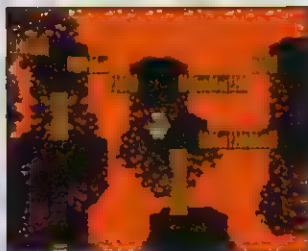
The next bridge to the east also has a lever in the middle, and since the span ends on a pedestal of rock with no prospects in any direction, you've got to pull the lever, of course. Sure enough, this creates a stairway leading south into a large flat area. Get Ether from the chest to the west,

head into the tunnel to the east, and, inside, bear north. You'll need to do a little wiggling east and west to get through.

Once clear, bear south and get Elixir from the chest. (Elixirs are always worth collecting — both for their healing powers and for use as a wager later in the game.) You should have a sip from it right here, for life is about to get confusing. You have entered an area full of pressure plates. When walked on, these hard-to-spot sections of ground (they look like trap doors) trigger an event. That event might be something helpful (and might not), and it might be something quite out of your view.

Let's start with the the pressure plate on the plateau off to the southwest — just opposite the tunnel entrance you used to get here.

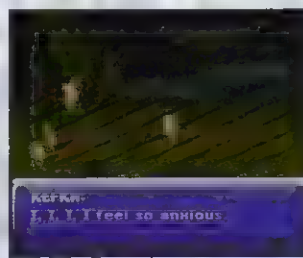
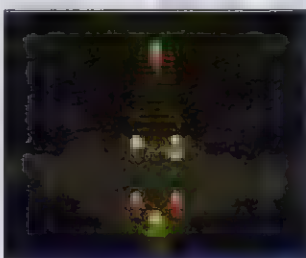
You have chosen wisely. A door opens just to the northeast. Inside, you'll find four chests containing two Magicites, Ether, and — wait for it — an Atma weapon!



If that doesn't send you into spirals of giddy laughter, go back and check the section on Albrook. (The Atma sword is an artifact from the War of the Magi.) It's a very powerful piece of equipment.

Note, too, that the Magicite in this case is not the Magicite you're used to. In this form, it's a standard Item, without names or spells. When selected in combat, it calls up random Espers.

Now, head back east, as far as you can, and then bear north, across two bridges, to a lever on an island. Push it, and the island to the east will rise and link up with the southern of the two bridges to the east. Cross this bridge, bear north and east, and get another Magicite from the chest on a dock to the north. The south exit leads to a sort of foyer for the Esper World gate, and you might as well use it because, while technically there are more places to visit, nothing much remains to do. (The chest you may have spotted to the north conceals a switch that toggles on and off the bridge to the far east land mass. Leave it alone and you'll be fine.)



And here, finally, up three short sets of stairs, is the gate to the Esper World. Terra steps forward. . . and so does Kefka. Your instinctive fear of a trap back at the imperial

camp was a good one, and now you're in for a fight to give Terra — back in pink Troll doll mode — time to open the door.

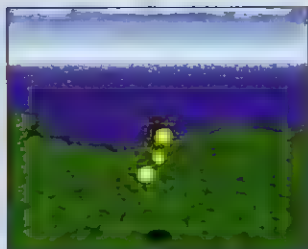
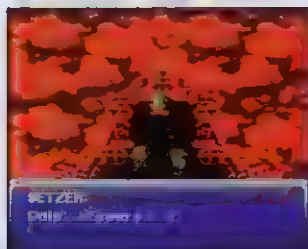
But the fight has barely started when the gate begins to open. And it's not the party that enters the Esper World, but the Espers who come into the human one. And they're not the Espers whom you came to know through Maduin and Ramuh. They seem enraged, and as the fantastic forms buzz low over the party, Kefka is swept away, and Terra is back with her comrades.



The gate closes again, and boulders block the path. The party has failed, and there's an air of pessimism as you take the south exit from the foyer (which exits the cave directly) and cross the imperial camp (still empty). Locke will meet you at the west exit and tell you that the Espers flew toward Vector. Uh-oh.

Vector

The party automatically returns to the airship. It won't have been aloft for long when Terra senses the presence of Espers. They race by, and in the wake of their stormy passage, the craft goes out of control. The ground looms up larger and larger below, and when you come to, the ship will be on the ground in the far southwest section of the south continent.



Head downstairs and have a talk with the non-party members, and particularly with Setzer, who'll report the airship is out of commission for the time being. He's correct: If you pop into the engine room, you'll see the mechanisms are shut down. (However, if you look into the machinery well in the parlor, you'll see they're running, so perhaps there's hope for the old bird yet.)

At any rate, you're going to have to resort to old-fashioned foot power for a while. (Aw, rats. It was nice being lord of the skies.) Reorganize the party to include Edgar. You'll need his abilities with Tools. Get a boost from the healer, replenish your stock of healing items at the on-board shop, and use the emergency exit to the south. (Told you that would come in handy!)

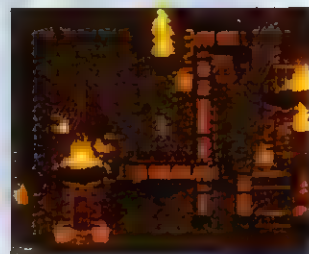
Maranda

You've been in this part of the country before. Maranda lies just to the northwest. Sadly, nothing's changed since our last visit. The dogfights are still going on in the center of town, and the road race of girl and guy continues down on the docks. The only thing you may have missed is Lola's happy response to the record you sent her, courtesy of the laid-up soldier in Mobliz.

It's also an opportunity, now that you're rich again, to pick up some armor for Celes, if you haven't been figuring her needs on your shopping list. Yup, she's going to be making a comeback real soon. Make your way north and east toward Vector.

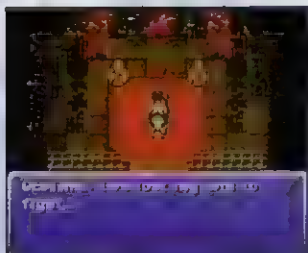
Vector

Bleak as Vector was on the first visit, you wouldn't expect this. The capital lies in ruins. Fires burn everywhere. The Magitek Factory is inaccessible. The people are mostly gone, and the Inn is unattended. (However, strangely, it's business as usual in the Armor and Weapon shops, and the old lady in the outhouse is still dispensing health and admonishing you young folks to "hang in there.")



You might think this was the doing of the Returner and Narshe forces milling in the streets. It wasn't. They seem in shock. Even Banon, who's up two flights of stairs to the north, is clueless. (Arvis, who's nearby, reports the city was like this when the Returners arrived.) The only way you can get this straightened out is by checking the one portion of the city that seems intact: The Imperial Palace.

The Imperial Palace



Don't worry. The Guardian, who usually watches the entrance, is either off duty or in the shop. Just head north, climb the stairs to the left, and you will be met at the top by an imperial retainer who ushers you into the presence of the emperor himself.

Gestahl seems defeated. He confesses he has lost the will to fight, and Cid, the factory scientist, chimes in with confirmation and an explanation of what happened to Vector. The Espers came to rescue their friends from the Research Center, and, learning they had died, lost it and tore up the place.

And here Gestahl cuts to the chase. He wants a truce with the Espers — he wants to make them understand the war has ended before they destroy the world. A job, Cid suggests, that no human can perform. It seems that Terra's getting set up to perform for the Empire the same ambassadorial duties she was supposed to perform for the Returners.

Gestahl is the Emperor and one of the bad guys. He is treacherous, in love with power, and willing to use any means to get it.





The scientist also notes that some imperial troops would rather fight than switch and asks that, before the big feed Gestahl is putting on for the party, you try to change as many minds as possible. You have four minutes to teach the world to sing. Start humming.

What a strange little mini-game they've set for you! As if you weren't suspicious enough already! However, if there's a hidden agenda here, it doesn't surface in any way, and the better you do now, the better you'll be rewarded later in the game. So let's get cracking.

You can't just drift all over this sprawling building searching for individuals to rope in. You've got to find the troopers in clusters. And you can't afford to get bogged down in too many combats with reluctant converts, as the clock keeps running even while you're fighting. So use Drill, to keep things short and sweet, on commandos who challenge you; be sure you speak to them again after the battle to win them over. If all goes well, you should be able to talk to as many as 24 soldiers.

Here's a good route:

- 1) Talk to the two sentries. Head south out the door, talk to the two flanking guards, the two Magitek troops farther south, and finally the three troopers just outside.
- 2) Back inside, bear left, climb one flight up, and enter the barracks. Talk to everyone here, including the trooper sitting on the bed, and then enter the closet in the rear and talk (and fight) with the trooper there.
- 3) Back out in the stairwell, climb to the top, enter the north door, and follow the small staircase to the top as well and exit to the roof. Talk to everyone.
- 4) Enter the penthouse where Kefka sent the cranes to attack the airship and speak with the trooper. (He'll want a piece of you, too.)
- 5) Depending on how speedily you got through the battles (and how often troopers blocked your path in the barracks), you may have some time left over. Enter the door to the right of the up staircase, head down the stairs, and enter the first door. Speak to anyone you find here, and don't neglect the back bedroom, either. Very good! Look for a nice reward when you leave the palace after the banquet.

A pleasant side effect of these rapid-fire chats is that you can gather a lot of information quickly. Some of it is pertinent to the game — Kefka's been jailed as a war criminal, and the Magitek Factory is being dismantled — and some is just poignant, like the guard on the steps outside who says simply that he's killed too many people and knows his life will never be normal again.

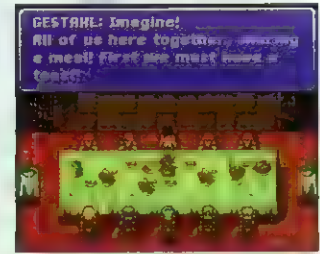
(Note: There's a little oddity in the game here. If you talk to the troops who flank the entryway on the way in before you meet with the emperor, they'll say the same things that they say later after you're assigned to recruit them. Sounds as though they didn't need much persuading!)

Chow time! The options that open the meal seem more courtesies than deep gameplay issues, but who knows what darkness lurks in the heart of a cart? It's best to answer diplomatically (toast your hometowns, rather than either of the rival factions); humanely (leave Kefka in jail, but don't kill him or free him); directly (is Celes a spy?); and honestly (Doma's poisoning was inexcusable, and the Espers were provoked).

Ask all available questions before you let Gestahl move on to the Espers; you won't get another chance later. (Try asking them more than once!)

He'll eventually turn the discussion to Terra's use as an envoy to the Esper community. The Esper war party has been tracked to Crescent Island — home to strange, silent Thamasa — and the emperor wants her to accompany him and General Leo (remember him from Doma?) on a freighter out of Albrook.

Agree. I know, I know, it's probably not what you want to do, but the game won't allow any other result. Leo will depart for Albrook, and Gestahl will declare, before retreating to the roof, that Terra is "our last hope." Where have we heard that before?



Does He, or Doesn't He?

Gestahl appears to be truly contrite, forthright about his past hunger for power and about Celes' genuine allegiance to the Returners. (She's no spy.)

But there's also something vaguely out-of-kilter here. Some of the soldiers you spoke with were actively hostile toward the party. Gestahl's responses to some of your questions were a little too indirect or evasive to be genuine.

All of a sudden, he wants to know which question you asked first.

And if you take the break Cid suggests, and speak to one of the special forces troopers flanking Gestahl at the table, they'll ask to spar with you to test your strength.

Doesn't this strike you as slightly weird? Gestahl, drainer of Espers, resurrector of magic, occupier of South Figaro, is suddenly getting all peaceful and nice because he's had his home turf plowed up by a superior force? Small wonder that, in the full party's huddle after the meal, no one argues for a trusting approach. It doesn't just smell like a rat. It smells like a Trojan Horse.

Then again, there's the earnest Cid, who helped you escape the Research Center and declared his Returner status over dinner. And on the way out, a trooper approaches and reports the emperor's reward for your good service in persuading his men to adopt peace.

There's some flexibility to this prize. It appears to be based partly on your success with the men and partly on your dinner conduct. I played this through several times, and the best I could get was:

- Withdrawal of imperial troops from South Figaro and Doma;
- Free access to the imperial armory in the base west of the Esper gate;
- A personal gift from the emperor: the relics Tintinabar, which permits the wearer to recover HP with each step, and Charm Bangle, which reduces the number of random encounters.

The party divides up after the banquet, and you don't have any say in its composition. Locke will escort Terra to Albrook and Crescent Island. The rest will remain behind to investigate and (according to Edgar) visit the imperial base.

But before you head out, have a look around the palace for supplies and oddities. (Hop on a toilet. It'll flush noisily.) The storeroom on the first floor in the west wing contains X-Potion and the relic Back Guard (which allows you to evade the always-nasty pincer attacks and strikes from the rear). The barracks has Tincture. The second-floor suite in the east wing contains Gale Hairpin, which allows more first-strike attacks, and in the back bedroom you'll find Revivify.



You've probably talked to most of the guards by now, but a few odds and ends remain. And down in the dungeon, monitored by a brooding Cyan, is a very ticked-off Kefka. Sabin, full of suspicions, can be found outside.

The city proper remains in darkness and flame. Let's get out of here.

Albrook



Whether you're on your way east to take your prize from the imperial camp or joining General Leo at waterside, Albrook's just a pit stop. The only thing new here is the merchants' optimism that business will pick up with the coming imperial withdrawal. Head for the docks. The ship's here, Leo's up on deck, and the first order of business is introductions of two new participants in the mission: Celes and. . . well, what do you know? Shadow! His unfriendly dog is there, too.

Celes and Locke aren't exactly on speaking terms just yet because of his earlier distrust, and, after some mutual popping of eyes, the lady general hurries away. (Shadow, as usual, has a solemn take on the situation: "I'm working for the Empire. But don't worry...I'm not going to garrote you." That Shadow. Always good for a laugh.)

A search of the town will reveal that Celes has disappeared entirely — nursing her grudge in private, no doubt — and that limits your options. You can make a journey northeast to the imperial camp, then return to the Inn at the east end of town, where Leo has set you up for the night. Yes, Edgar did say the rest of the party would take care of things at the camp, but wouldn't you be more comfortable having those supplies available now for your sea voyage?

So go on: Beat 'em to the punch and make the march to the northeast. It's rich with reward, indeed. The basement room in the imperial base, now unlocked, contains:

- The relics Back Guard, Cherub Down, Cure Ring, Running Shoes, and Wall Ring. Of these, the only one we haven't seen before is Cure Ring, and it's a dandy, permitting the wearer to restore HP. A party using these in combat will often make up all its losses before the battle ends.
- 41,000 GP, distributed among three chests. That's more than you could make in a big dungeon.
- The Flame Sabre, found not in a chest, but in the stove. (Very funny, Squaresoft!)
- X-Potion, Ether, and Elixir.

It's Quite a haul! Lugging that stuff back to Albrook probably has you pooped, so hit the hay. Tomorrow's a long day.



Locke may have a little trouble sleeping. He's got something on his mind: Celes, and their little scene back in the Research Center when she realized he doubted her. He'll creep out in the middle of the night and find her, alone, at the run-down balustrade overlooking the harbor. (Notice that the music from the opera is playing.) He'll try to talk to her, try to explain, and won't get very far before she runs off again.

Sigh. This is not going well.



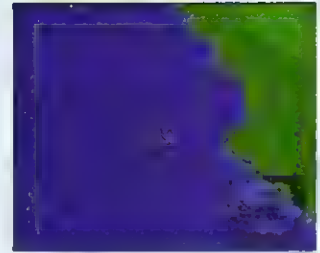
Shipboard

In the morning, when you're ready to make waves, return to the ship and speak with Leo. He'll set sail immediately, and since the ship's not due at Crescent Island until the next day, he'll recommend that you take it easy until then. You will do so automatically.

Terra seems to have some trouble sleeping, too. This night, she's the one up on deck, and it's another tender moment. Leo confesses that he was aware Terra was being used by the Empire as a kind of biological experiment, and that, in a way, because he didn't speak up and object, he's as bad as Kefka.

For her part, Terra is bemoaning her lack of a romantic life and wondering whether she'll ever be able to love someone. (This isn't the first time we've heard her on this subject. Remember her talk with Locke at the Returners' hideout?) The reverie is broken by the appearance of Shadow, who has come out to sleep under the stars. He tells her to look within, and reminds her solemnly that many people hide their feelings.

Exit Terra stage right. Enter a seasick Locke, who leans over the rail and begins throwing up.



Crescent Island

Land ho! The day dawns with the ship's full company on deck and the player in control of Terra. Speak to the troopers before moving on to Locke — which kicks off the expedition — and you'll learn of the rumor that magic survives on the Crescent. Interesting: Last time we were here, in that freshly acquired airship (now, what did become of that?), there wasn't a hint of magic. . . or even common courtesy.

The party will split in two to explore this remote sliver of land. Leo will be with Celes, Shadow with Locke and Terra. But before they go, Celes and Locke get to make another little scene, and this time in front of everybody. This time it's Celes who makes the friendly overture and Locke who's the stubborn, uncommunicative one.

Ah. Young love.

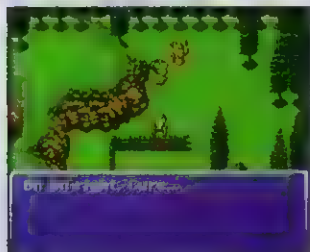
All ashore that's going ashore. And a shore is about all you'll find here. Crescent is essentially a game preserve: forest, mountains, plain and large stock of lizard-like Baskervors, octopus-ish Cephaler, and the occasional bizarre Chimera.

The only settlement is Thamasa, at the northern end of a peninsula off the east coast, and it's changed a lot since last visit. For one thing, the people here will actually talk to you. Even if it's just the Valley Girl-ish: "Oh, wow. Strangers!"

Let's get the shopping taken care of first. (The shops are laid out in Thamasa Strip Mall-style in the south end of town.) Hope you brought along enough cash. You'll want to bring back some Darts (10,000 GP) for Setzer and Stout Spears (10,000 GP each) for Edgar and Mog. The Arsenal also has an array of rods (3,000 GP a pop) that cast a Level 2 spell but break when used. They're not a good deal when Terra can loose a Fire 2 on her own for 20 MP. Let's move to the next counter and look at the armor.



Well, this is like being a kid with his nose to a toy-store window. Everything here looks good, especially Gold Armor (10,000 GP), Gaia Gear (6,000 GP), and Mystery Veil (5,500 GP). Six party members can use Gold Armor, but that will run even the healthiest bank account into the ground very quickly, so go for the economical Gaia Gear, which not only offers better protection against magic but has only a slightly poorer defensive rating.



The Item and Relics Shops — the latter just across the bridge to the east — offer nothing new, but drop in at the Item one anyway. The customer there is dying to tell a secret. She stops short of doing so, of course, but sometimes just knowing there is a secret is enough. Step lively, gang, and keep your eyes open as you do the rest of the town.

In some respects, Thamasa's still a paranoid little community. The innkeeper is still calling the party "strangers" even though they've been here before, and he's still asking 1,500 GP per night for a bed. Some smug guy is blocking the doorway to the English manor-style house north of the Relics Shop. The fellows milling about the central square loudly claim ignorance of Espers. And the Elder, whose house lies to the northwest (check out the cabbage garden in back), gives you the old "what magic?" line.

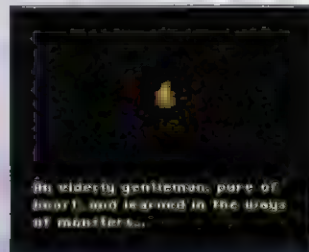
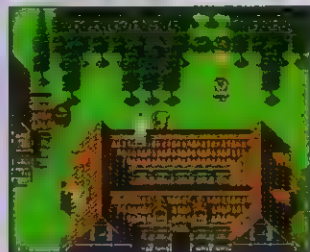
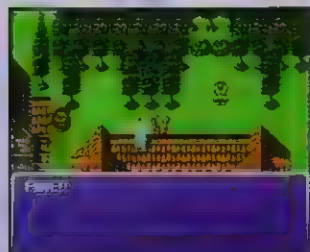
Something is going on here, and if you stick around long enough — there's actually nothing else to do on this island, anyway — you'll see it. Poke your nose up the little green alley to the right of the Elder's home. The party will hear a sound and follow it up automatically, advancing up the lane to a green field. A child here is complaining of an injury, and her mother is casting a cure!

Oh, once she sees you watching, she'll try to recover, pretending she was speaking of "cure medicine." Yeah, right! The kid blows it for her; she pursues her mother, crying "Mama! Please use Cure on me!"

When you get through laughing, try to follow them. You'll have to detour around the house to the south and into the next alley to the east, where you'll hear a different sound: "FIRE!" A little boy is practicing a Fire spell against the bushes to the north. He'll spot you as well, make the sort of sound the Three Stooges' Curly used to make when startled, and take off like a rabbit.

The rumors of magic on Crescent are true, and that must be the unspoken secret of the woman at the Item Shop. Thamasa is just thick with magic. You've seen it. Trouble is, no one you've spoken to yet will acknowledge it, much less explain it.

But one house you haven't visited. It's in the northeast corner of town, and it's home to an old gentleman named Strago and his artistic granddaughter, Relm. Strago gives you the Thamasa party line: Esper? What's an Esper? He's just wrapping up this shtick when Relm wanders in and asks whether the party can use magic, too.





That's a cat that simply can't be stuffed back into the bag, but Strago makes a valiant attempt. He sends Relm off to her room (followed by Shadow's now-friendly pup, Interceptor), and protests that she's young, that Thamasa is just a little out-of-the-way village, that there's really nothing to be said.

All right. We have nice polite people in this party, and we're not going to intrude on a pleasant old man and his little granddaughter. Fortunately, the meeting with Strago is a "trigger" event, and it changes the way Thamasa's people treat you. They have had a sudden attack of sociability. The fellows milling about in the center of town now offer constructive advice. The smug drip blocking the door to the manor house now talks lilytingly about little Relm. The innkeeper is suddenly having a fire sale: 1 GP per night. Take him up on it.

Fire is just

the word. Strago rushes into your room in the middle of the night and raises an alarm. Relm was staying at a neighbor's house — the big one we've been calling the manor house — when a blaze broke out. She's trapped inside, and he needs your help to rescue her. Off go Terra, Locke, and Interceptor.

(Shadow just moves sleepily under the covers. Y'know, every time you start liking this guy, he goes and does something heartless. Ah, but watch him. He'll surprise you.)

Relm, Strago's granddaughter, is an impetuous, precocious young artist who can weave spells with her brush. Specialty: Sketch/Control.





Strago is Relm's grandfather. He's the oldest member of the party, but don't think he's not tough. His Blue Mage skills will come in handy. Specialty: Lore.



Fire, Fire, Burning Bright

Across town, the fire is already pretty far along — you can hear it and see the glare from the inn — and Strago, moved to desperation, begins casting spells to knock down the flames. His neighbors join him. Nothing happens. The fire gets worse, and the old man resolves to enter the burning house.

That brings out the best in Terra and Locke. They join him, and the threesome steps into the inferno.

It's pretty spooky inside, with walls engulfed in flame, but don't feel overwhelmed. The maze isn't complex and the enemies are easily disposed of — provided you don't start throwing fire spells around! In fact, it's a little easier than usual, as you can actually see your opponents before combat and thus try to avoid them. Most of them aren't tough, so don't waste Strago's Aqua Rake Lore in earlier portions of the house.

Follow the corridors north, west, north, and then east, and you'll find yourself in a hallway with two doors in its northern wall. Don't open the left-hand door unless you're simply in it for the money. (Each attempt will be answered by a pincer attack by four Balloons.) Enter the right-hand door,





then the left one, then the left door again. Bring the party up to full strength, head north up the stairs, and you'll find yourself in a large room with a single, stationary ball of fire at its center.

This is the FlameEater — the heart of the fire and a very tough boss. (Use Ice Spells on the FlameEater.) He's got a full repertoire of Fire spells and a habit of creating a wall of Balloons as a buffer. Just focus your attention on the boss, not his assistants, and hit hard and often.

A bark off to the north! It's Interceptor, pulling Relm out of harm's way. The party will move toward them, only to be overcome, and it's sleepy-head Shadow who finally pulls the fat out of the fire. He fights off the flames and uses a Smoke Bomb (like there's not enough smoke in here as it is?) to bring everyone to safety.

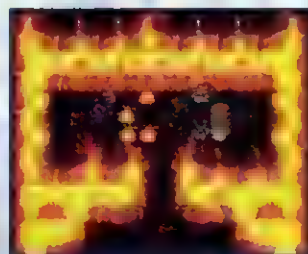
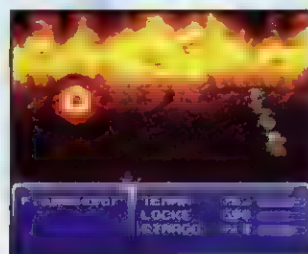
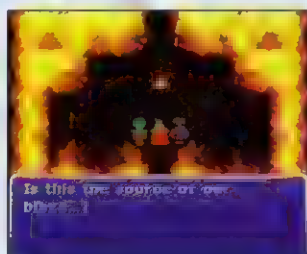
(Note: Other supplies — some of them useful in freezing out FlameEater and his buds — can be found in other branches off the corridor. There's no time penalty for rescuing Relm late, so proceed at your own pace.)

In gratitude, Strago tells Locke and Terra a story. In times long past, humans who used Magicite to gain magic power were known as Mage Warriors. After the War of the Magi, when the Espers fled the human world, the Mage Warriors were left behind. Hated by other humans, who believed they had started the war, they were hunted down. The ones who escaped found their way to Thamasa. Their magic has lost its edge over the years. But it still exists.

But where are the Espers? Strago suggests that they must be in the mountain range to the west, where, it is said, they were created. He'll take the party there. Relm is to stay home, and Shadow, as is his custom, will go on alone.

The old man hasn't told you everything, however. Talk to one of the men in the center of town while making your exit, and you'll learn Strago's a Blue Mage who can memorize the attacks of monsters. You probably won't see this happen for a while yet, but it's a good thing to know in a pinch.

Head back down the peninsula, round the southern tip of the mountain range, and bear north. A tunnel portal will be visible dead ahead.



Under the Mountains

The entryway to the maze is essentially a giant "X." The party enters in the lower-right leg. A Heal Rod can be found in the lower left, and exits in all four, but the two left-hand legs are connected by a rope bridge. Exit into the maze via the upper right leg and bear north.

Say, did you see something just before you exited? Yup! A frolicsome little form is following you. It's Relm, unhappy with her instructions to stay home, tagging along just at the fringe of your vision. You can't catch her, and don't try because it will probably just drag you into unwanted combats. (She'll join up with you at a critical point that's now close at hand.)



Unwanted combats? Well, yes. Chances are that you will encounter a very nasty creature called the Mandrake on this green plateau. It is resistant to the party's tougher hand weapons, it uses Drain well, and it actually thrives under Strago's Aqua Rake Lore. The best move is to hit the whole Mandrake party with a Fire 2 right off the bat and then take them down in hand-to-hand combat.

Head north, east, and then south, and you'll make a real discovery: three statues of goddesses.



Strago will reveal that the three were responsible for the creation of magic, and that the statues are magic's source. They were built by Espers, and Terra suggests the Espers who trashed Vector may have come up here to sun themselves in their sphere of influence.

And the stone goddesses on which they are based? Hidden — probably in the Esper World — and possibly the source of the Esper World's protective seal.

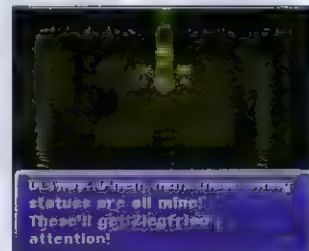
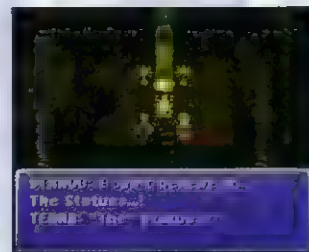
Now, perhaps it's just force of habit from years of pretending in Thamasa, but, again, Strago hasn't told you quite everything. Locke mentions faint writing on the backs of the statues. Read it for a description of how the Espers were created — innocent human bystanders in a battle of the three gods — and more. (One more thing: Remember Kefka's spiel in the Magitek Factory? He said something about "restoring the statues.")

The party will scarcely have set out for the exit to the northwest when a familiar purple form will knock everyone flat. Oh, no: It's Ultros again — water sportsman, opera buff, and now, evidently, statue collector. He's gloating over how these beauts will impress Sigfried.

Huh? Say again? Sigfried? Not the same bloated "master swordsman" you met on the Phantom Train? The same. You're just tying up loose ends right and left in here, aren't you? Naturally, this big doofus wants to fight, but, as always, he has more life force than combat ability.

You'll need to shave off about 10,000 HP before Relm finally strolls on stage. She's got the same beguiling manner with Ultros (calling him "sweetie" and even "Uty") as she did with Interceptor. The octopus doesn't seem to have any experience with small, precocious children, however, and hurts her feelings by refusing to have his portrait painted. Locke has to talk him into it. (Yes, every combat with Ultros is approximately this weird.)

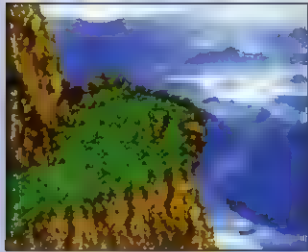
Once he agrees, combat resumes. When it comes Relm's turn to strike, have her raise her brush, rather than a weapon, using the Sketch command. She'll draw the nicest little picture of Ultros, who will see he's nothing more than a "stupid octopus," and split. Make for the exit. Bring the party up to strength, use the save point you'll find just to the east, and take the down staircase into the large room below.



It's not the dead-end it appears. The three square outlines on the floor are pits leading to different portions of a maze below. There's just one choice (the southernmost) that will kick the story along, but the other two do lead to useful items, and the northernmost one is an especially profitable excursion.

It drops you down onto a path between two obvious exits. The northern exit takes you out-of-doors to a precipice where you'll find a chest containing a Chocobo suit — the perfect armor for Strago. (Take a look at the gorgeous view of the misty mountains while you're there.) The south will take you to another chest containing a Tabby Suit — this one best suited to Relm. (If you haven't done so already, optimize the equipment for each of these characters.)

You've probably run into a critter called the Adamanchyt by now. It's a mountain-going version of the Baskervor, but much harder, more resistant to hand weapons, and able to deal out damage in 100-plus HP blows. (And it's rich in experience points.) Do not mess with it more than you strictly have to. Fire, Fire 2, and Aqua Rake will take it down most quickly.



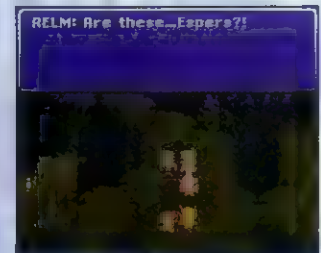
At this stage, you may find yourself praying for another Relm to come to the rescue, as there doesn't seem to be a way out. You're stuck. The would-be exit — a bridge to the southeast — is broken.

Well, did you actually try it? The party can hop over these gaps, and that works great with the broken bridge. Now you can exit either to the statue room or to the out-of-doors section that led to it. Make it the former, exit to the northwest, and save your game once again at the save point. (Same story with the eastern pit. A chest containing X-Potion lies to the east, and, again, you can hop off the broken bridge to the southeast and make your way back to the statue room.)

So, south, finally. Bear north, west, and north again into the cave entrance. You'll immediately recognize that you have penetrated to someplace quite special. The maze-like passages are gone. Shafts of light shine down from holes in the ceiling. Head south, and almost immediately you'll see an Esper quietly flexing its wings.

Then there are more Espers, from the east and south. Lots more Espers.

Locke senses a trap and sends Strago and Relm back to the north. Too late: Espers are there as well. Locke assumes a combat pose.



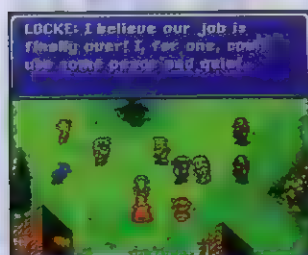
And then, thank goodness, someone intercedes. The Espers fall back. Yura, apparently the leader, approaches from the south. Strago feels a vast magical force welling up in Terra, and Yura must feel it, too, for he knows she is different from the rest. He explains the encounter at the gate as a coincidence — Terra happened to open it while some would-be rescuers were camped nearby — and once they were in the human world, they lost control of their powers.



That accounts for the destruction of Vector and their retreat to this mountain enclave. He's obviously sorry for the deaths and the damage, and Locke takes this opportunity to bring up the peace mission and invite him to Thamasa to meet with General Leo. Yura seems a bit surprised at the offer, but accepts it in good faith.

Thamasa

And it looks here as though the game is ending. Why not? It's been a good, long ride. Everyone's gathered around happily. Leo and Yura are burying the hatchet. Locke and Celes are looking into each others' eyes. Relm throws in the perfect off-beat ending line. Locke's even waving to you from out of the screen. Back to Vector for the end scene of the game, yes?



Elder's house (he's not in) and Strago's (nothing unusual here) and, incredibly, spend an uninterrupted night at the Inn.

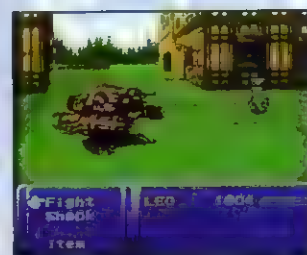
But there's no escape: The Guardians have blocked the south and west exits, and they're impervious even to his brutally powerful Shock technique. He's going to have to fight Kefka.



Well, no. Sorry. Had you going, right? It's a fake ending — wonderfully designed but, like Gestahl's sudden passion for peace, a little too easy to be real.

From out of the north comes that... that laugh. Kefka. Three large Magitek warriors proceed to start blowing away party members and even the imperial troops accompanying Leo. Naturally, the whole thing has been a filthy imperial plot, and Kefka's here to reduce the Espers to Magicite and return them to Gestahl in Vector. Oh, and as an afterthought, he's ordered that Thamasa be burned to the ground.

Leo finally joins the party here, as we might long ago have expected him to do. He can't stand by and watch this. But he's just a man, albeit a powerful warrior, and, on his own here, with the party unconscious, he's no match for Kefka and the three huge Guardians accompanying him. He does have some freedom of movement within Thamasa. He can hit the shops, stop by the



Or so he thinks. That mincing figure is only a shadow. And the image of Gestahl is just an imitation. The only real thing here is the murder of Leo at the hands of a Kefka chanting "Hate...hate...HATE!" as the screen turns blood red. Poor Leo. We hardly knew you.

Far away, deep in the Cave to the Sealed Gate, a pebble rolls down the stairs. The gate is opening, and monstrous forms cross the bridge. The Espers are fleeing the human world yet again. But watch — you don't see the Gate close again, and you know what they say about unlocked doors.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Kefka's not done with Thamasa. He's like a little kid who's had way too much sugar: a regular ball of energy. Only this is magical energy. One moment he's telling Magicite jokes and the next shattering the air with spells and gathering shards like it was going out of style. ("Ooo," he says. "They're warm to the touch.")

At last, he supposes he has enough — until he crosses through the Gate into the Esper World.

FINAL FANTASY III

PART 5 NOT WITH A WHIMPER



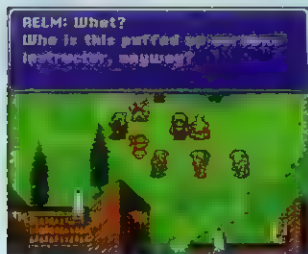


Thamasa After Leo

How our fortunes have shifted, and how the mood has changed. When we see the party again, it is gathered at Leo's grave. No, this isn't some gaming trick. He's not going to be resurrected like Kefka or Ultros. He's really dead, really buried, and much mourned by Terra, who seems to have taken to heart what he told her up on deck that night on the way to Thamasa.

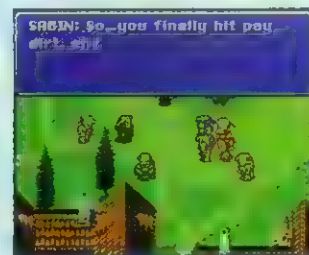
And he is not the only casualty. A wounded Interceptor limps up to the party. Shadow, who chose to search for the Espers alone, apparently has fallen as well. And the party's thoughts now naturally cast back to the others still waiting at Vector in the black heart of the Empire. What has become of them?

You will see them soon enough. The airship is back in action and on its way. Setzer, Cyan, Edgar, Sabin, and the rest are OK. (It seems that they escaped because of Edgar's woman-chasing.) They arrive in Thamasa with the surprising news that the Emperor is a liar. Well, duh! It's back to the airship, with Strago and Relm now in tow, for a planning meeting .



Relm's quickly establishing herself as a personality to be reckoned with. Watch what she says to Sabin. And catch the cute scene in which Relm calls Edgar "lover boy." Where do kids pick this stuff up?

Have a look at your relics list: You'll see that you've acquired a Memento Ring that offers Relm (and only Relm) the protection of her departed mother's love.



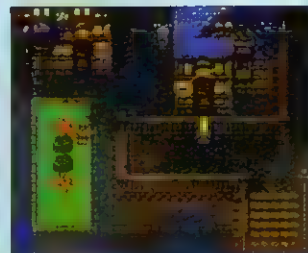
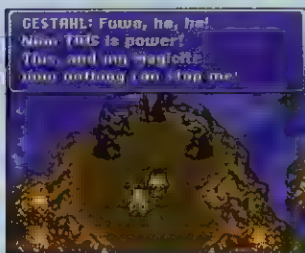
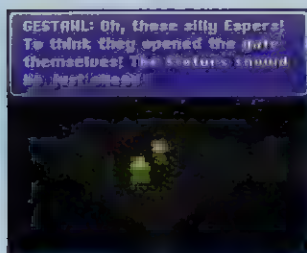
Before you go back to the airship, though, re-enter Thamasa. Kefka seems to have not followed through on his promise to burn it, but it is much changed. The hillside cemetery, which had only two graves, now has eight. Interceptor, masterless, wanders by himself. Others ask about the Espers or curse the Empire and its servants. A little boy will only say, "It hurts."

And the mayor, as mayors tend to do, tries to put a good face on things — taking comfort that more didn't die.

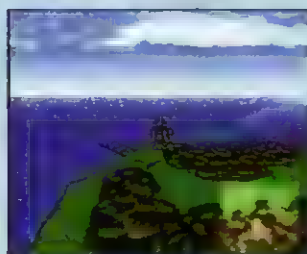
However, the shops are still going full blast, and you may now want to use some of the 20,000 to 30,000 GP you should have earned in the Esper hideaway to pick up some of that Gold Armor at the Arsenal.

There's one new character, too: the warrior Gungho. You'll find him in front of the mayor's house. He's been away from Thamasa for a while but recognizes Strago and recalls him quitting his luckless search for a monster called the Hidon on Ebot's Rock.

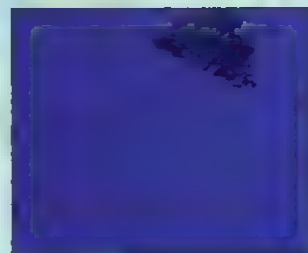
Well, no, Strago protests, he didn't quit, exactly, but the island is submerged. Gungho doesn't seem too impressed with the answer. Let's go back to the airship. This is getting a bit painful.



It's about to get a lot more painful. Kefka and Gestahl have wasted no time in returning to the Sealed Gate. Which, right now, might be better described as the Wide Open and Banging in the Wind Gate. (In their panic to flee, the Espers left it open behind them. No dessert tonight for them.)



Beyond it, they find the stone goddesses that are the source of all magic, and the planet undergoes a wrenching transformation. The eastern third of the southern continent (where the Gate is located) rises into the air. The grounds split; Jidoor is increasingly cast in shadow. The bridge east of the Imperial Base is now a dock on an eastern sea.



World Tour, Part Two

There's worse to come: Strago observes that if the statues are moved out of their delicate balance, which neutralizes each goddess's power, the imbalance will take the world apart.

You can go after the flying continent directly, but do you really think you're ready? Once you're there, there will be no turning back for a while, and it's not a bad idea to beef up the inventory first — especially with Tincture, Fenix Down, and Smoke Bombs. Let's take another trip to pick up things you may have missed, max out equipment, and fill the pantry.

— There's a wedge-shaped island far to the north of Thamasa. You can put in here and have inconsequential battles with Leafers and Dark Winds and, very occasionally, with a dangerous, magic-throwing giant known as the Intangir. This creature, which remains invisible except when struck by magic, would appear to be Strago's "Hidon," right?

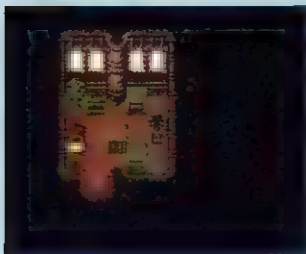
Not so. A game with a fake ending may also have a fake Ebot's Rock. The real rock, a stone's throw north of Thamasa, won't surface until the second half of the game, when this strange island farther north also will find a role of its own to play.

— Everywhere, the Empire is in retreat. Imperial troops have pulled out not only of South Figaro and Doma, as Gestahl promised, but Albrook, Maranda, and Tzen as well. Even Vector is eerily empty. (Vector is too empty; everyone's gone — imperial guards, Returners, invaders, shopkeepers. . .) Townspeople all across the realm speak of their relief and about things getting back to normal, and the rest of what they have to say is quite out-of-date with what's going on. They have no idea what's happening in the sky above.



- Only in Albrook, closest to the former location of the Esper Gate, do people know that things are going badly. In the shadow of the Floating Continent, Albrook is now in a state of perpetual night. (A curiosity: The Magitek freighter you took to Crescent Island is back in port.)
- Shadow appears to be dead by reputation only. You can search Crescent Island from stem to stern, and you won't find any sign of him. It sounded too good to be true. <grin>
- In Maranda, you can continue playing Cupid for the wounded soldier in Mobliz and Lola, using the delivery service to send tonic for Lola's ailing mother and, later, another letter.
- In Jidoor, another auction is being held. Just what's on the block now is a matter of timing, but you may find Cherub Down again and, possibly, a Magicite shard! It's expensive, but don't worry if you can't afford it. It will remain there until you can.
- In South Figaro, note the empty suit of Magitek armor in the northern part of town. It's been there a while, but now it's unattended. You can't use it, but it tells you something about the haste of the imperial retreat.

You can have a chat with Duncan's widow. Do you get the impression that she doesn't know what truly happened to her husband? Or does she know something you don't?



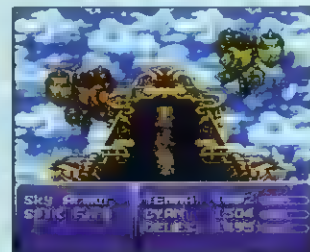
— We've never actually been inside Doma Castle before — except on autopilot with Cyan in his pre-party days — but Gestahl came through on his promise of withdrawal, and the great gray palace is empty of imperial troops. Indeed, it's grimly empty of people of any description, though a thorough search will turn up a half-dozen healing-related items and one heretofore unseen relic. It's called Beads, it allows the wearer to randomly evade enemy attacks, and it can be found in a far-flung out-building in the southeast part of the fortifications. (To reach this parapet, use the southeast door in the foyer just south of the King's Room.)

- If you're looking for Returner advice on how best to proceed, you're fresh out of luck. Banon, Arois, and Narshe's Elder are nowhere to be found. (Narshe seems utterly unchanged.)

The Airship

At length, however scary the prospect, you'll have to take the airship's wheel and choose to find the Floating Continent. That takes place automatically, but you'll have to choose a party of three (not four, for reasons that will become clear). Terra, Celes, and Cyan makes a good crew.

Not that you'll simply pop in as though on your way to the grocery store or something. The Imperial Air Force apparently is patrolling the continent and chooses this moment to announce its presence. You'll have to destroy nine to 12 of its planes — helicopter-shaped craft with jump-jet style engines — before an odd, pink creature begins floating toward you. After ou defeat another four to six planes, the creature comes aboard at the rear of the flight deck. Each imperial plane has about 1,200 or 1,300 HP; a Level 2 Ice or Fire, with a little SwordTech thrown in, should shoot them down very nicely.

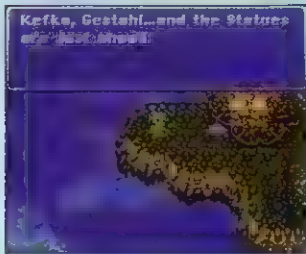
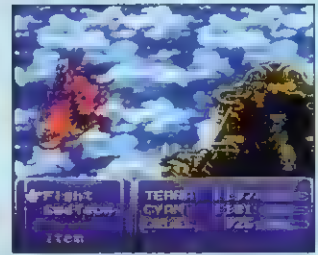




Head to the back of the ship. Your enemy is waiting. What a surprise: It's Ultros yet again, swearing that this is his last fight with you! Make it so. Turn all your power on him. When he's almost done for, he'll introduce you to his pink pal, Mr. Chupon, whom he describes as taciturn, but immensely strong.

Taciturn, yes. Mr. Chupon does not favor Ultros's comic approach to combat. (He says only "Fungahh!") He prefers to hit the party with fireballs, and he likes fire himself, so in the later parts of this battle, you'll want to use Terra mainly as a fighter. However, he's not much more durable than the octopus. And before long, impatient with your tenacity, he'll use the Sneeze technique (yuck) to blow all three of you off the deck.

Well, that's one way of getting to the Floating Continent! Fortunately, your HP and MP are restored automatically after this battle, for you've got another battle in the air on the way down. This one's with an individual unit called Air Force, which looks roughly like Dumbo equipped with laser and missiles.



Once the missiles laser and missiles are knocked out, look for it to launch a magic-absorbing Speck, so don't get too far along in the combat process and start wasting spells. Once the Speck appears, move to plain old hand-to-hand combat. When it's over, you'll have a Czarina ring (which casts Safe and Shell when HP are low).

And now you're on a far west corner of the Floating Continent. Immediately make for the save point that lies just to the east. It's a long way to the next one. Up to this point, with a handful of exceptions, you've probably been used to being master of most combats. Here the opponents (lots of dragons, behemoths, and ninjas) are much closer to being your equals, and the tough ones can mess you up badly — rapidly chewing up HP and supplies.

A pre-combat checklist for the Floating Continent:

- 1) Optimize the weapons and armor for each character, and try to be at Level 30 or higher.
- 2) Make sure that every party member has two relics equipped and that they're appropriate to the character. (Cyan wouldn't be caught dead with Earrings.)
- 3) If you haven't done so already, the time has come to call upon the powers of the Espers who turned themselves over to you.
- 4) Use the Config menu to set Battle Mode to "Wait" if you need time.
- 5) Take your time. Do not hit one character with a spell that can hit six. Do not select an option simply because you don't have to search for it in a menu.
- 6) When in doubt, run away. When not in doubt, also run away. If you try to fight every creature that challenges you, you're going to take a very long time to get through here and probably won't get through at all. The only creatures who won't permit you to flee are the ninjas, and if you get the jump on them, they can be handled with minimal damage to the party.



Don't rush off just yet. This section has some of the best graphics in the game. Take a peek over the edge at the moving clouds (and other, land-bound continents) below. Spot any familiar landmarks? (You will: Keep an eye out for the airship.) And check out the spooky rock formations; they look as though they have heads inside them. This doesn't look like anything we saw in the Cave to the Sealed Gate.

Finally, check out the crumpled form nearby. It's Shadow! Hi, Shadow! We thought you'd bitten the Big One. But Shadow is, as they say, a survivor. He even shows that rare tender side again: He wants to know about his dog. (Hmmm. Come to think of it, the last time he showed that side was also regarding his dog. So never mind.)

Let's cut out the mushy stuff and get down to business. Head east and climb the ladder. The blocking terrain at the top will disappear automatically, and you can make your way south, where the same thing happens again. (Isn't this sort of like the door to the haunted house opening without any help? You're not walking into another trap, are you?)

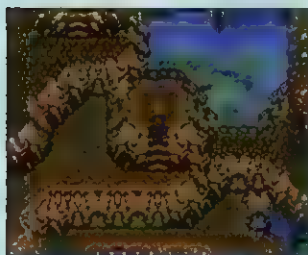
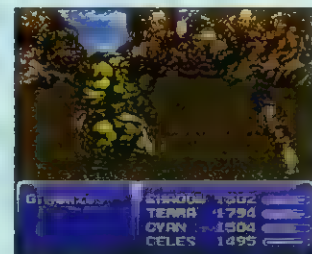
Eventually, you'll come to an intersection. A blue ball appears at the top on the northern passage. In this odd world, that's the equivalent of a chest. Open it and get Murasame, a powerful sword — perfect for Cyan because it will nearly double the big guy's Evade ability. Bear east again and, in the north wall, you'll see a small alcove. Step into it, and a ladder will appear nearby leading up to the platform above.



These card-table-like platforms are entrances to tunnels, which work automatically and can take you some distance across the map. Since you don't know the map, hold off for now. (You should be better equipped first.) Instead, press farther to the east, where the passage will open to admit you, and you'll see a ladder leading down to another blue ball.

This is the biggest and baddest in the series of monsters in a box we last saw on the Phantom Train. He's a Gigantos — "Throat Jabs Our Specialty!" — and, as the name suggests, a very large adversary who can decimate a party in no time. As with many of the creatures in FF3, raw force is effective here. Shadow should be throwing any old dirks and Shuriken he's been saving up, Celes and Terra casting the highest Fire and Ice spells they've mastered, and Cyan doing the SwordTech voodoo that he does so well.

"But if he's just a monster in a box, why are we going after him?" Good question. Partly because his death will give each party member 2,516 experience points. (The only creature here with more is the large Dragon.) And partly because it will get you the weapon Hardened, which Shadow can use.



Head back to the platform you passed up a few minutes back and stand on the dot in the center. You will automatically descend, then surface off to the southwest. (Note that these tunnels run both ways.)

Go down two sets of stairs to the south, bear east, and then stand in the alcove to the north to trigger completion of a bridge leading east. Cross it and bear south down the stairs. Don't go down the next long flight of stairs, however; the path east from them is blocked. Keep pressing east, across the

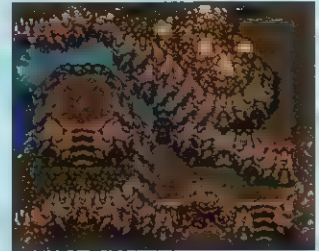


area with the seam in the ground, and climb the ladder and drop into the tunnel. This will cart you off to the northwest, close to two other tunnel entrances.

All the possible branches and similar terrain will make life feel a little complicated. Don't let it get you down. You're not missing any great prizes out there. In true FF3 style, most of the tunnels you don't use are dead ends.

However, the tunnel entrance just south of the one at which you just arrived leads southeast. Use it. When you surface again, bear southwest and stand on the rock you'll find here. It lowers a large platform to the south — that area with the seam that you crossed earlier — and in doing so opens a blocked path.

We'll come back to that in a moment. Now head northwest, up the stairs, and hit the button against the wall there. This lowers a smaller section of land, creating a shortcut that allows you to go back to explore the southern area you just opened up.

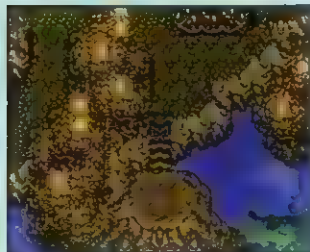


Pit Stop

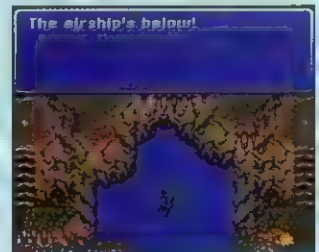
You'll need to backtrack now to the area you visited after you exited your first tunnel. Check back a few paragraphs. Remember a long flight of stairs you weren't supposed to descend? It's okay to do so now. This will ultimately lead you into an area with several branching paths — each of them short and each important.

This area is a sort of rest stop where most courses of action are close at hand and rescue is cheap. Are you worn down by all this fighting and just want to get out of here? Bear north and step into the alcove, and you'll open stairs leading to a tunnel just to the northeast. Use this; you'll move straight west and wind up overlooking a window on the world, with the airship just below you.

Walk down to the precipice, and you'll have the opportunity to return to the ship. (Shadow will drop out if you do. Don't worry; when you return to your initial drop-off point, he'll be waiting in the spot where you found him.)

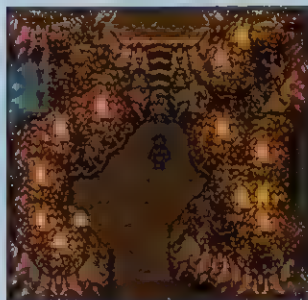


Now, if you don't dive for the airship, there's still more to do here. Due south, down some stairs and into a tunnel (a sort of hydraulic tube), is another save point. Use it. (And to the east is a chest containing Beret — a helmet for the artistic Relm that increases her chances of success with Sketch.)



Back Into the Fray

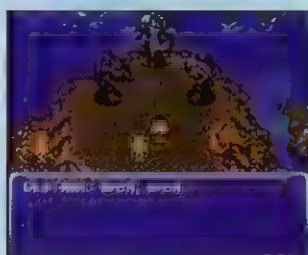
But how do you make progress? These all sound like side roads. Not really: They're just a couple of traffic lights along the highway. But that raises a good point: If you've been following up all these



other tunnels, you've been finding a lot of dead-ends. There is one correct path, and it's better hidden than in FF3's other dungeons.

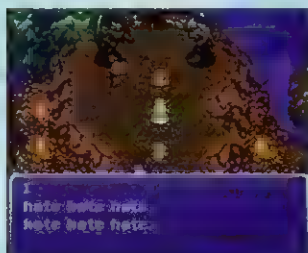
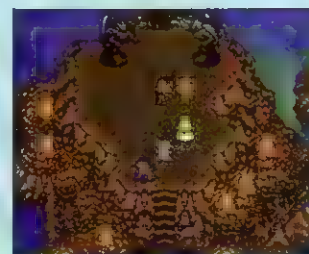
See the dead end just west of the airship boarding point? Try going north here. Aha! The wall opens, and suddenly you're in a wide-open area facing a < gulp! > Atma Weapon at the northern end. (Actually, it looks more like a Catma Weapon!) Remember the descriptions of the Atmas you heard in Albbrook: "... the other was a monster, bred for mass destruction." This is it.

Actually, the Atma is a relative pussycat. Cast Vanish on the party (or have one of the party use the Phantom Magicite shard) for invisibility. This will effectively make you unhittable, except by magic. If you have Celes use Rune Edge to absorb the Atma's magical blasts, everything should be fine.



Shadow will leave you again here on the same excuse as earlier — great timing, Ninja man — and you'll face the climax as a threesome. At the top of the stairs are Kefka, Gestahl, and the statues. Don't worry about what to do; once you step up far enough to be recognized, you're on autopilot.

Maybe you should have just crept back on board the airship and flown away. Terra and Cyan will quickly be held captive by the statues' magic power. Celes, a Magitek knight bred to serve the Empire, is urged to kill her friends as a display of faith and rule the universe at the imperial leaders' side. (OK, hands up, which one of the designers is in love with "Return of the Jedi"?)



By now, you should know just where Celes's heart lies. She does the Right Thing: turns down the offer and stabs the monster Kefka instead. (Kefka says "Ouch!" as though he'd pricked his finger.) And for a while, it looks as though the game will end happily: Kefka's antics here are like death throes (only funnier), and we just wait for him to fall over.

But he doesn't fall. (If the 2,000-HP blasts he absorbed in your earlier battles wouldn't take him down, a little sword thrust certainly won't.) He survives, and the incident seems to have driven him to the edge: Kefka appeals to the statues to give him their power. Even Gestahl is appalled and tells him to stop — revive the warring statues, and the world will end. When Kefka ignores him, Gestahl decides to put him "to sleep."

But Gestahl finds his spells don't work. (Listen closely, though: there's one you haven't heard of before.) Kefka is standing within the magical field of the statues, and the Emperor's magic is absorbed. Now it's Kefka's turn:





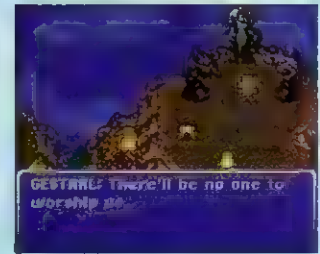
He renews his appeal to the stone goddesses to show Gestahl their power, and this time they respond. Here comes lightning, hitting closer and closer (coached along by Kefka as spotter), until a bolt finally hits the Emperor.

And what does Kefka do? Kefka kicks his old master, kicks him the way he kicked the Espers in the Magitek Factory. (No matter how unpleasantly this jerk dies, it's not going to unpleasant enough.) And when the dying Gestahl

makes one final attempt to reason with his disciple, telling him no one will be around to worship him, Kefka shoves him off the edge. (Again like "Return of the Jedi"!)

When Celes speaks up, he hits her so hard she's almost flung off herself.

And then friend Kefka, wise Kefka, endearing Kefka, does the very thing Strago warned could set the goddesses off. He pushes the statues out of position.



Game over, man.

Or so you would think. But not quite. Shadow must have been keeping an eye on events from some unseen hiding place nearby, for once again, he arrives just in time to pull Celes from the brink. He traps Kefka between the statues and remains behind to hold him there. His last words before you slide away are a promise that he will see you again.

At first, the promise seems to have been made in haste. For, under the mounting pressure of the chain reaction created by the magical imbalance, the Floating Continent is going to pieces. The party faces a long, time-limited (six minute) run across shattering terrain to a rendezvous with the airship — interrupted by battles with new monsters that seem to have been released by Kefka's actions.

Most of the enemies are Naughties — that's their name and their temperament — and they're strange birds, with women's bodies and hair but cow-like faces. They have around 2,500 HP apiece, and a Fire 2 from Terra should be plenty for each. (Don't use Ice, though. They eat it up.)

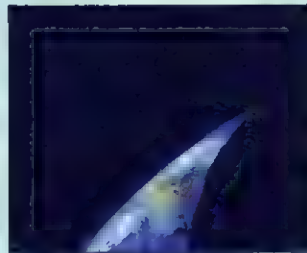
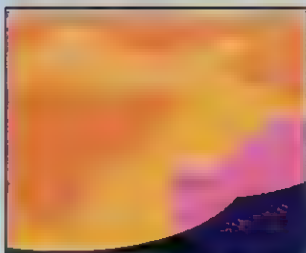
After about a half-dozen of these fights, you'll catch up to a magical spark loosed by the statues just before your escape. It's a spindly "boss" called Nerapa who likes to cast a spell called Condemn. This gives each target a final fuse; when it runs out, the character runs out. However, the time limit is pretty generous, and Nerapa should be out of commission long before it expires.



You Always Want What You Don't Have

That blue ball near the jump-off point for the airship looks like a teasing distraction to make you waste time. Ah, but you can get it! Just approach it from the other direction. The question is: Why would you want it? It only contains an Elixir.

Now, to the brink. The airship is below, and you can jump down to it. But wait: Aren't you missing someone? Shadow did say he'd see you again. He has saved the party more than once, and it seems only right to wait for him. So choose "Wait," then step up to the eastern precipice a few seconds



before the limit runs out and choose "Wait for Shadow." He'll appear to the west, and the party will jump down to safety.

Ah, but the safety is only temporary, and this seems a meaningless success. For the world as you know it is ending in the very way the party so struggled to avoid: a magical Armageddon. The power of the out-of-balance statues is savaging the globe. Great slabs of land rise up.

Magical eruptions blossom like nuclear detonations, and the airship, caught up in the fury, splits in two, the rear half plummeting to earth.

The last thing we see is Terra, hanging from the remainder of the flight deck, holding on to Setzer for dear life.

Then they, too, are gone.



**Shadow
and Interceptor.**

FINAL FANTASY III

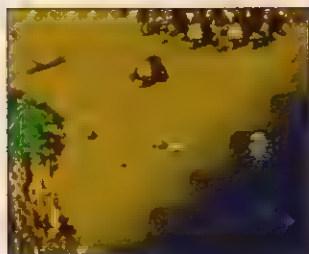


PART 6 A NEW WORLD





Between a Rock and a Hard Place



It's a year later in game time, and we've got almost a whole new RPG — a sort of Final Fantasy 3. The face of the earth has been reshaped, and few of the rules we held dear now apply.

The airship, which made life so much easier, is gone. The quest has come to a halt. The party's members are divided — maybe even dead; you don't know. The sky is a sick, yellowy orange, the light is hot, land looks like lava, and the water looks like old blood.

And Celes, on whom the scene opens, doesn't really know where she is. All she knows is it's a rock in the sea with a tattered one-room house, a beach with a resident seagull, a bit of desert, a few trees. Nearby lands, if there are any nearby lands, are too far away to see.



Cid, who's been looking after Celes during her coma, explains that after the cataclysm, he awoke to find Celes and himself here, along with a handful of other survivors. Celes naturally asks after Locke, but Cid can't say; for all he knows, they might be the last people alive on the planet. The other islanders died, and he tells her eloquently "of boredom or despair," adding that they could simply live out their lives as though they're grandfather and granddaughter. Celes seems to not mind that idea.

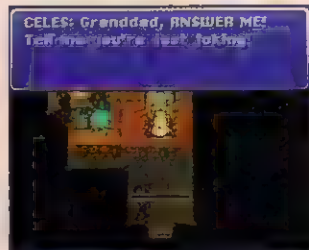
But we immediately know that will not be for long. Animals and plants have been dying, and that wheezy cough tells you that Cid, too, is ill. He hasn't eaten in three days. Celes volunteers to catch a fish for him and puts him to bed. (Y'know a Cure 2 might work nicely, too. . .)

First off, save your game. It's a long way back to the Floating Continent.

Then make for the beach. It lies straight south from the house. Simply wade into the sea, and you'll grab the first fish you come in contact with. (You can't get the other.) Bring it back to the house directly if you want to see Cid and his little yellow slicker again — he really needs the energy — and collect a small clue. When you return, you'll see him doing something at the left side of the room, which he tries to conceal by getting back into bed.

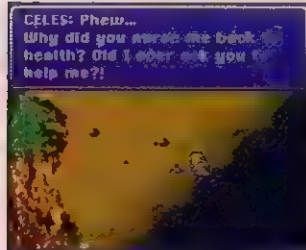
There's nothing else you can do here for the time being, so do a little exploring. It's a short trip. The rocky, arrowhead-shaped island could fit in your pocket, and there's so little to do at this stage that you'll be grateful even for the occasional skirmishes with EarthGuard and Peepers. (Combat's rarer on the rocky sections, and none of the monsters seem to yield gold.) Let's go home.

Ah, but now there's really no home to go to. Just a house. Cid has died in Celes's absence, and her grief is inconsolable: She has been left alone again, and in this most grim of places. She races to the northern promontory and

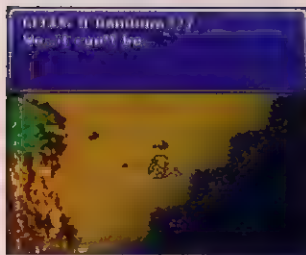




finds, written on a white rock, a note from Cid. When other island residents were feeling low, he writes, they would take a leap of faith from these cliffs and feel better for it.



That's not quite what Celes takes. She doesn't jump, but appears to fall deliberately, and it has the feel of a suicide attempt. She isn't successful, however, and winds up back on the beach where she caught the fish, insanely berating a seagull for having nursed her back to health.

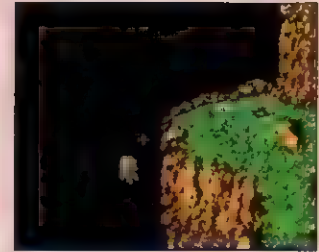
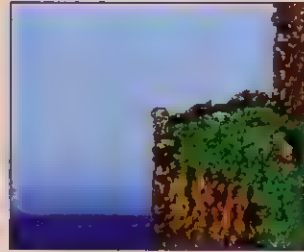
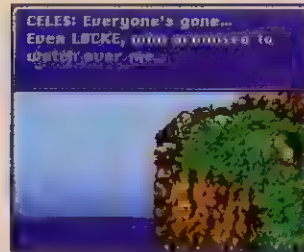


Now she takes a different leap. . . a leap of logic. The seagull is wearing a bandanna — Locke's bandanna — and she somehow interprets this as a sign that he's alive. (Funny, I'd take it as a sign a seagull got tangled up in a bandanna.) Anyway, she's got a reason to go on, and that's nice. Go find him, Celes.

Head back to the house — nowhere else much to go, anyway — and you will detect two changes. Cid must not have been entirely dead, for a letter from him has suddenly appeared beside the bed, and there's now a descending stairway in the west wall. Read the letter first: It urges Celes to leave ("The others are

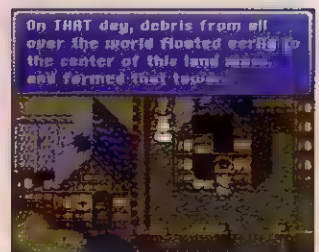
surely waiting for you") and directs her to the stairs. Well, after the Apocalypse, that's kind of a big assumption, don'tcha think, Cid?

But Celes can't live here, so take the twisty course downstairs and get the raft you'll find at the bottom.



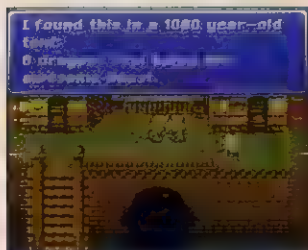
Albrook

Don't worry about where you're going. This trip's on autopilot. Landfall is just east of Albrook. The town's looking much more battered than on your last visit — as if from a fire, or a rain of stones — and the news here, while plentiful, is almost entirely bad.





Kefka lives. Figures. He and the statues are installed atop a tower in the center of the continent — formed from debris that drifted in from all over the world. He's behaving very much like a malevolent god, using a device called the Light of Judgment to punish communities that oppose him.



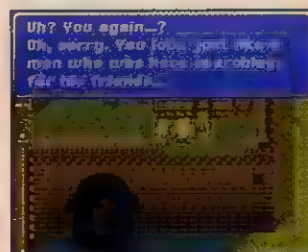
The same magical Armageddon that wreaked havoc on the planet has released great monsters from their prisons: Doom Gaze, Phunbaba, and the eight dragons. Doom Gaze is supposed to be especially fearsome, and you'll run into Phunbaba soon enough. A legend from the War of the Magi era reports that if the eight dragons are defeated, a creature of vast power, Crusader, can be released. (Now that sounds like a plan.)



You want other points of interest? Did you ever visit the artist who lives upstairs from the Armor Shop? He's been painting a portrait of Gestahl ever since the party first visited Albrook. However, the Emperor didn't care for it, and the artist has sold it to Owzer (Jidoor's richest man) instead. The bartender at the cafe has a little, Game-Boy-colored reminiscence about the good old days of imperial occupation. The Weapon Shop has stocked two new items: Blizzard and ThunderBlade, swords that randomly cast Ice and Bolt, respectively. (Skip them. These aren't top-of-the-line weapons at this stage. Celes should still be using Morningstar, a superior weapon.)

While we're on the subject, note that the full party still appears in the Weapons and Armor Shop menus. That's a good sign they're still among the living! And despite the airship's crash and Celes's year off, she still has access to the party's full pre-crash inventory.

Most tantalizing of all, however, is the tip from a woman at the east end of town. It's hard to imagine how anyone could mistake Celes for a man — them's fighting words! — but that's what this woman does. She tells her she looks like someone who was in Albrook recently looking for his friends. He headed north toward Tzen, and we will, too.



Tzen Again



Tzen is still almost directly north of Albrook. The trip should be uneventful, but you may want to stop and take a look at Kefka's tower. (It does have that found-in-a-landfill look, and naturally, you can't get inside at this stage of things. But it's also not dangerous terrain.)

Another thing to try along the way is to find some clear terrain for a solid backdrop and take your first good look at that new world map. Man, what a can of worms: A half-dozen ropey land masses, some of them tenuously connected to each other by strands of rock. (You're on the largest, and most far-flung, of the southern islands.) It's going to be awkward exploring, and it's probably best to hit places as you hear about them rather than searching in the dark.

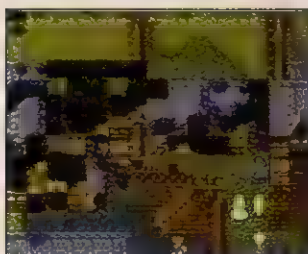


Tzen has never been of special interest to the party, save that one trip to buy Magicite on the sly in the northeast woods. (Incidentally, that fellow is still out there, and still saying the same thing.) It's been more of a way station to gather info or the odd weapon than a destination.

This time around, however, it's home to a mini-quest. You'll hardly have reached the top step of the entrance stairs when the place will erupt into light and motion; Kefka's Light of Judgment apparently has touched this little town. The most severe consequence seems to be the impending collapse of a large house in the northern part of town. It's a place you haven't been able to enter previously. (A woman looking for her child was always blocking the door.)

Now the child is trapped inside, and the house is thronging with monsters that use Petrify attacks, as you'll learn from the crowd milling outside. To be on the safe side, you'll want to equip an anti-Petrify relic (like Jewel Ring) before you enter.

Hey, look who's holding up the place like Hercules: Sabin! He can't help Celes inside — he's got weightier matters to address — but he'll rejoin the party once the child is safe. Once you speak to him, don't stand around outside. A clock has started counting down.



Two things make this a particularly nice little puzzle:

- 1) The kid is a bit tough to spot. (He's sitting on the left side of the mantelpiece of the fireplace in the raised portion of the cellar.)
- 2) The place is loaded with goodies — stuff that you won't be able to go back and filch once you bring the child out because the building will collapse.

So the trick is to get it all — oh, yeah, and the kid! — within six minutes. Running from every combat, you should be able to do it in about half that. If you hit all the chests, you should come out with a Heal Rod, Tincture, a Hyper Wrist relic, Magicite, Drainer, and Pearl Rod. (That's fewer prizes than chests; the ones west of the fireplace and at the top of the stairs to the basement both contain monsters in a box designed to slow you down.) The two new items are Drainer — a special, damage-absorbing sword Celes can use — and Pearl Rod (which, like all rods, casts its namesake spell and then breaks).

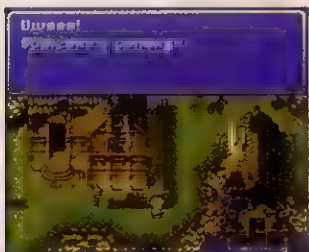
Once the kid's OK and the house comes down, the townsfolk, less frantic, will bring you up to date on all the post-imperial dirt:

- 1) The Serpent Trench, whose swift currents you used to reach Nikeah from Mobliz, now lies east of Tzen. It's now above sea level, and a "Cult of Kefka" has built a tower nearby.
- 2) Further east lies Mobliz. It was a recent target of the Light of Judgment, and many adults there died trying to save their children.
- 3) North on the Serpent Trench is Nikeah. You can still catch a ship there.
- 4) The party can expect more Zombie and Petrify attacks from monsters.



Mobliz

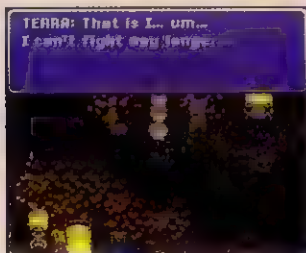
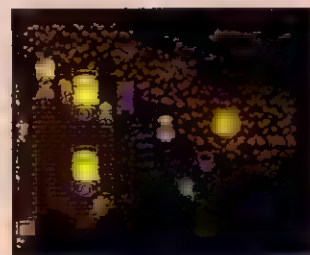
You could go straight to Nikeah from Tzen, but the connection with peaceful, remote Mobliz was a special one, and the news that it has been singled out for Kefka's attention invites a visit. You'll want to follow up on that wounded soldier and his love, Lola. Perhaps he needs another letter written, or perhaps he is already back home.



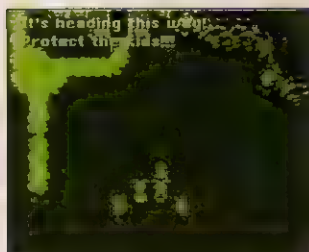
Mobliz is still remote — a long trip out to the rocky tip of this island's curved eastern peninsula — and you could call it peaceful. But it is the peace of a ghost town. The wind will be in your ears the whole time you're there. Its buildings are empty, its layout is unrecognizable, its gardens are brown and dry, and its funky country charm has been ripped away by Kefka's hot light.

And yet there is someone here. Dogs send up an alarm when you reach the first dilapidated building, and a child comes out of a house to the west to investigate, then vanishes. Follow him into the house. Get Elixir from the clock (some rules don't change), descend to the basement, and go through the north door.

The room is filled with tiny children. You seem to have entered an orphanage — a hidden orphanage with a combative young doorman. He takes you for an enemy and is ready to tangle, stepping back only when a voice comes from the room to the north.



It's Terra! She's been serving as a substitute mother to the orphans of the attack on Mobliz, and... well, she's going to continue doing it. She can't bring herself to return to the quest. She feels needed (they call her "Mama"), and this new role seems to have answered some need within her. Perhaps the one she keeps coming back to: to love someone. There's nothing for the party to do except leave.



Oddly, it's at this very moment that Terra is called upon to go back into combat. You heard of Phunbaba back in Albbrook. Well, this fat green demon has arrived in Mobliz — the whole place shakes with his footsteps — and Terra must face him. And must lose. Unequipped, starting with half her normal HP, her Fire spells ineffective, she can't stand alone against him.

When Terra falls, wounded, the party comes to her aid and takes on the demon. This is a much fairer fight, and after losing 10,000 or so HP, Phunbaba decides to have his phun elsewhere. Unfortunately, for party purposes, all this does is confirm Terra's earlier decision to stay; recovering in bed, she says she's lost her fighting edge.

"Maybe after a little more time passes," she says. You'll have to come back later.

Well, that achieved approximately nothing! If you want to get even more depressed, talk to the kids.



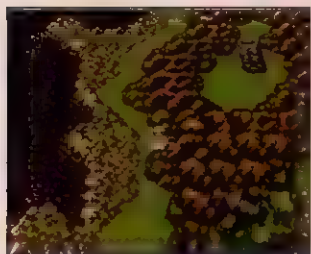
One of them will tell you that the wounded soldier has died. (The house to the left, where he was staying, has a rich emptiness to it. It's like visiting the home of a departed loved one.)

And just south of the entrance, and easy to miss, is a four-plot cemetery. You can make out the crosses on the tombstones. Mobliz never had a cemetery before, and it seems an indignity that such a pleasant, lively place should have to deal so much in death.

On the plus side — for there is a plus side — Phunbaba is a butterfingers and dropped the Magicite shard Fenrir on his way out of town. The little doorman found it and hands it over as you leave. It's the strongest yet. Fenrir produces multiple images of the party in combat, making characters much harder to hit, and gives the user access to Warp, X-Zone, and Stop spells.



Nikeah



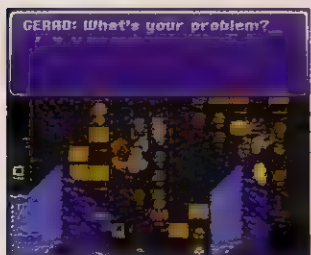
This leaves only Nikeah on our short list of places to visit, and naturally, it's at the tip of the northern peninsula — a good long haul from Mobliz that will take you past the Cult of Kefka's tower. (It's surrounded by mountains and inaccessible for the time being. Oh, for another airship and a star to sail her by.)

At first glance, Nikeah seems unaffected by the transformation of the world around it. The layout is still the same. The buildings are untarnished. The shops offer many new items. And it's still a bustling port town. But the bustle now seems slightly, . . . contained. People seem to walk a step slower, and are more willing to gossip.

However, we'll tackle the shops first, as the gossip ultimately will take the party out of town. New to the game are: Diamond Vest (a pocketbook-breaking 12,000 GP); Diamond Helm (8,000 GP); Diamond Shield (3,500 GP); the Enhancer sword (10,000 GP), which increases magic power; and the Zephyr Cape relic (7,000 GP), which allows the user to dodge attacks more easily.

Your money's mileage may vary, but at least plan to bring Celes up to spec here — she can use all the armor and the Enhancer — and pick up an additional Diamond Vest for Sabin.

Now for the gossip. Doma Castle still exists. A man will tell you he awoke alone there after the world changed and that, when he tried to sleep, demons would attack. (You'll hear this elsewhere, too. It's worth checking out.)



Figaro Castle remains in the game as well, but somewhere beneath the desert. It ran into an obstacle while burrowing and came to a halt. Sandworms — hey, ya hate 'em, right? — broke into its prison, freeing the thieves, who are now clustered in Nikeah's dockside cafe awaiting passage to South Figaro.

Make the cafe your last stop and speak to the thief at the bar last of all. This bunch is pretty loose-lipped about its plans. Their old boss died the day



the earth moved. But they met a new one in Nikeah, and he wants to sneak back into Figaro Castle to get booty from a storage room. (It must be some part of the castle we never saw.) Evidently there's a secret passage that only the thieves can find.

The new boss? His name's Gedar. Funny, if you rearrange the letters, that spells Edgar! He's not aboard ship, however, and the thieves there aren't interested in your company. (If you speak to the captain, you'll learn the band has a name: The Crimson Robbers.) Check the town again, and just

north of the cafe you'll spot a familiar, woman-chasing face: Edgar!

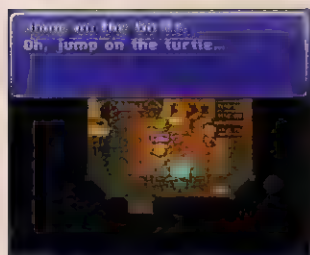
Talk to Gedar. He'll head back to the dock, and the party should badger him at each of his three stops on the way. He'll own up to nothing, so Edgar/Gedar's either lost his memory or is involved in some creative charade. Either way, you now have a spot on the boat — as a stowaway. Follow the boss to the dock, and you'll automatically jump down and hide behind some crates, where you can listen to Gedar address the thieves and then sneak aboard to the rear for a short trip to the southwest.

South Figaro

All ashore that's going ashore. The thieves have vanished, but the man just north of the docks will report that the leader is on the second floor of the Inn. (The thieves are downstairs in the Cafe, and you can question the patrons for the odd detail — someone looking for a secret treasure has been around — or more tales of loss from that fateful day.)

You'll find Gedar upstairs in the private room to the right, but he's no more helpful than before. A thief comes in to report that all's ready, and they're off — without you, needless to say.

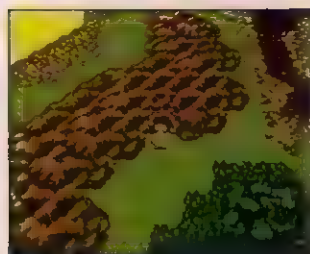
You can explore South Figaro now, if you wish, without fear that you'll miss something at the castle. (In fact, you'll hear a reference to the treasure room's secret entrance in the song sung by a child on the second floor of the big house in the northwest corner of town.)



However, you don't need to hear the song to find the entrance, and you probably will need the money that this next trip will earn you to improve the party's weapons and armor at South Figaro's stores. So let's follow the story now and come back to South Figaro later.

Fortunately, you won't need to look far to find the thieves. The tunnel that leads to the desert portion of Figaro is now just slightly southwest of South Figaro. The purple figure guarding the north door is, of all people, Sigfried. He'll tell you to wait for him to clear out the monsters — yeah, right, Sig — and disappear. (It looks as though he's simply an opportunist rather than a member of Gedar's band.)

Ignore him and enter anyway. The cave's layout hasn't changed, and the chests you looted earlier in the game are still empty. But the monsters have gotten much tougher. (The Dantes, however, will fool you: They look like





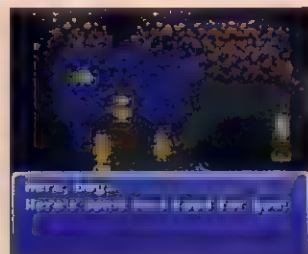
bosses, but have only about 2,000 HP.) All should be well within range of your ordinary combat spells and moves. Be sure to fight the combined bands of two Humpties, a Cruller, and a NeckHunter. These will yield 2,779 GP each. That builds up in a hurry.

If you don't recall how this maze works, bear east, then north, and take the first northern passage after the tunnel winds back toward the west. This lands you in the entry room on the Figaro side of the tunnel — the one with the recovery spring — and a door you cannot get to

on the other side of the pool. Ah, now you're seeing the light! Gedar looks around the room's other entrance to be sure he's not being watched, then lets the thieves proceed.

Getting to the door is simple. The robber band offers food to the turtle to lure it in front of the door, then uses its back as a stepping stone: thieves, Gedar, and, last of all, Sigfried step over. The turtle will have drifted out of position by the time you reach the pool, but just wait until it drifts back to the left and use the A button to hop to the door.

The thieves have already made quick work of the four chests in this east-west corridor, and if you exit at the west end and bear north at the branch, you'll find Sigfried looting another. (He'll run off at your approach.) A southern door at the end of the western spur leads into the far right cell in Figaro Castle's dungeon.



Below Figaro Castle

Enter and you'll overhear Gedar checking to see that an injured thief is OK. They have run into some kind of trouble. Actually, it looks like quite a bit of trouble, for this thief, the one at the top of the stairs, the engine room chief down the left-hand stairs, and the thief down the next flight will say only that "it was awful." Evidently they found whatever it was that stopped the castle in its tracks.

Hey, you're finally going to get to see Figaro's engine room. The chief used to warn you off it on account of it being "dangerous." Well, now it's really dangerous. Bear north through the gallery, down still another flight of stairs, south past the thief-in-shock ("It was awful," part 5), and into the vault.

Time to do a little looting yourself: In the room straight south, you'll find Crystal Helm (which Celes can use right away), Gravity Rod (it casts Quartr, which reduces an enemy's HP by three-quarters), and the traditional high-end healers, Ether and X-Potion, in the room to the west.

You came in via the right-hand of the three doors to the north. The left-hand of the remaining





two leads to an “up” staircase ending in another gallery, and the room at its north end contains Regal Crown. Have Sabin equip it, then take the party back down the stairs and enter the center door. This trench leads to the engine room, the source of the trouble, so pause first to restore HP and MP.

No wonder everyone's got the creeps. Something yellow and unpleasant is swarming all over the castle's twin engines. Gedar sends the thieves to get the treasure from the room at the rear and, finally giving up the charade, gets the party to help him fight the tentacles. Each of the four has about 5,000 HP, but they also have a thing for grabbing characters and squeezing them — enhancing their own life at the expense of the unfortunate party member.

Fortunately, this is a slow process, and they rarely grab more than one member at a time. The free members can simply hit the tentacle in question to get it to discard the character.

When it's over, Edgar will explain his impersonation. He'd heard the castle was in trouble and wanted to help, but he couldn't find it on his own. (As Celes suggests, it's remarkable that none of the thieves recognized him as they're from his own jail!) The party hides as the thieves leave (the treasure they've taken is worthless, Edgar says), and the brothers are finally reunited for a second time. Two characters accounted for, eight characters to go.

Don't let Edgar's comment about “worthless” treasure keep you from checking out the treasure room in back, however. The thieves missed one item: Soul Sabre, a damage-absorbing sword that randomly casts the Doom spell, can be found on the central rack.

Mis-spelling

Usually spells and items do exactly as their names suggest. Usually, Doom typically means death to whoever's on the receiving end. But try casting it on a party member using the Relic Ring. It won't kill. It'll heal.

Same deal with Revivify — an item used to restore zombified party members to normal status. Ah, but use it on an undead enemy, and he's outta here. Dead as a doornail.

Sometimes two spells can be combined for an effect that neither could achieve alone. Having trouble sending the enemy on an extra-dimensional vacation with X-Zone? Keeps missing, right?

Well, have you noticed that spells always hit characters who are invisible? So hit the enemy first with a Vanish spell and then with the old X-Zone. Kiss them goodbye — they're out of your life. (Then again, this technique will also take a lot of challenge out of FF3, so if you have to use it at all, use it sparingly.)

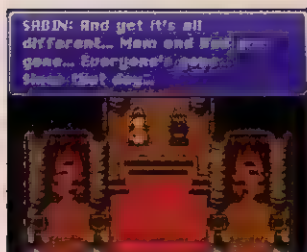


You're done here. Climb back to the engine room chief, who'll declare the problem fixed and bring Figaro to the surface in the middle of the desert that lies west of the tunnel entrance. Speak to him again, and you'll discover that the castle is still prepared to go to Kohlingen, as before.

Ah, thanks, that's good to know, but don't go just yet — the party has some business back in South Figaro.



Figaro Castle

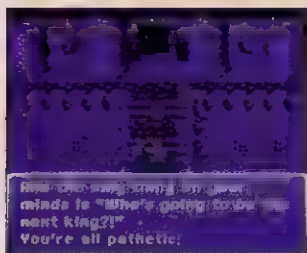
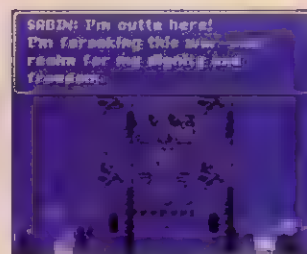


While you're here, however, do go topside and explore the castle again, as the main doors are now unlocked. (Just like last time, Sabin will take off on his own here.)

Once again, the two wings are temporarily off-limits, but you can still drop by the library (where the workers seem astonished at news that seems old to you); visit the prison (now empty of prisoners, but with a guard who seems willing to put forward a candidate); and have a nap.



If you pass up the nap and speak to the attendants, you'll learn that some of the castle residents left to join the Cult of Kefka. One woman leaves a sentence unfinished: "If a loved one should call out a cult member's name, however. . . " What? What? The member will return? He'll die? What? Don't you just want to shake these video-game characters sometimes? (Don't worry. There's no way to learn the cultists' names, but there is one cult member whom you already know. That's a little ways down the road yet.)

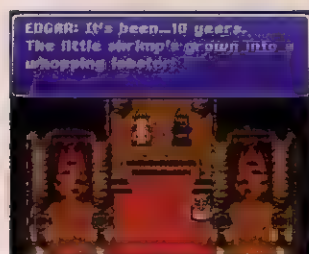


In fact, take the nap whether you need it or not because this gives Sabin the chance to take center stage for a sad reflection on death, change, and the circumstances surrounding his father's death.

It has been 10 years since that night. The brothers are out on the parapets when a matron brings word of the king's final request that Figaro be divided between his sons.

Sabin, the rumor of imperial involvement in the death sticking bitterly in his craw, can't stand the succession talk. Wildly, he claims no one cared when their mother died, strikes out at the matron, and condemns the Empire for murder.

Atop the castle, the brothers settle their fates with a coin toss, and Sabin chooses to go his own way.



The return of Edgar from his nap interrupts this reverie — Edgar sweetly calling his muscular brother "a whopping lobster," and Sabin fondly returning the compliment ("king crab"). Edgar takes the other throne, and the brothers talk for the first time since Sabin saved the inexperienced party from Vargas up on Mt. Kolts. The king proposes a toast to their parents, to Figaro. . . and to a "couple of confused grownups."

Here-here! Completion of this scene opens up the full castle. The Chancellor will acknowledge Sabin admiringly. You can visit the wings, where Sabin can make amends, of a sort, to the matron. And you should definitely stop by the Tool Shop and pick up its first new toy since Drill: Debilitator (5,000 GP), which creates weak points in enemies.

Exit, save your game, and make your way east to the coast and south toward South Figaro.

South Figaro

We barely got a peek at this place in our pursuit of Gedar and his four thieves. Now that you have a chance to look around, it seems to have borne the troubles well, and the zeal of its residents is undiminished. (OK, OK, so a number of them appear to be thieves!) Repairs are being made on the big house in the northwest corner of town, and one resident tells you that even if Kefka's Light burns the town down a hundred times, it will be rebuilt a hundred times.

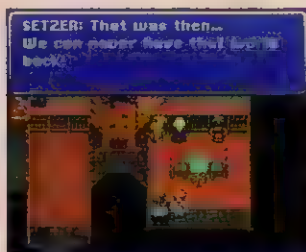
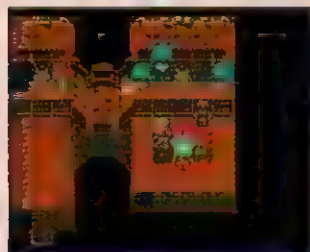
If you walk the eastern portion of the town wall, you'll spot a man and woman closeted in the woods. Given South Figaro's past, this looks suspicious, but speak to them, and the man will declare, "For each life lost, a new one arrives to fill the void! OK! Nothing's gonna stop us." There's spirit for you!

As in the early part of the game, South Figaro is also a reliable source of hot new weapons, and now, with some fresh money in your pockets, you should be able to afford them. At the Arsenal, get a Gold Lance (12,000 GP) for Edgar from the Weapon Shop and Diamond Armor (15,000) for Celes and Edgar from the Armor Shop. Terra can use an Enhancer as well, but with a 10,000 GP price tag and no clear idea when she'll be rejoining you, mark this nonessential for now.

At the same time, there is some odd news about. Duncan's "widow" says he's alive and meditating north of Narshe. (So Narshe survives, as well!) Mark that down on your list of Things of Check Out.

Time to pack up and head back to Figaro Castle for the ride to Kohlingen. (Just for reference, you can find the castle most easily by bearing north up the continent's east coast and then turning west just short of a little north-south inlet.)

Kohlingen



Figaro Castle is a complex challenge. The Castle doesn't only burrow under mountains, but under oceans, as well. We're about to experience that first-hand.

The town isn't within shouting distance after the castle surfaces, but it can be found on a peninsula to the northwest. You'll want to spend some time here, for it's a regular hub of activity.

You'll find one character and get leads on two others.

You'll find Setzer sitting at a table at the Inn. The gambler wasn't exactly a willing convert to begin with, and he doesn't embrace the offer to take up pursuit of Kefka now. Like Terra, he seems to have lost his edge. This new world is too disordered for a gambler who relies on fixed rules for his living. And his airship is gone.

Celes takes command here: She asks him if he wants to live in this unhappy world or change it. This seems to connect with something in Setzer's game spirit. He agrees and points the party toward Daryl's Tomb — a pinprick in a grove of trees on a peninsula to the southwest — where, he says, they can find a new airship.



New airship? New airship? Things are almost looking up.

The tomb is our next destination, but stick around Kohlingen for a bit yet because there's plenty more to see and hear. For instance, a young blonde woman reports that a character who could only be Cyan — he kept saying “thou” — visited the town recently. And the

herbalist east of the river says Locke must be searching the world for a fabled treasure; find the treasure to find him.

There are also lots of little details you won't want to miss. The older woman beside the General Store will offer a lovely, animated reminiscence of the Kohlingen of old, with green grass, running children, and birds in flight. The young people up north complain that nothing grows; the seeds they've planted haven't borne fruit. (Try standing just north of the little girl in the red dress for a nice touch.) The Narshe soldier will warn you that the town

is now thronging with monsters. Ah, but speak to him again after Setzer rejoins the party and you'll see how his spirits have been lifted. As Shadow said back on the Floating Continent, people are counting on you.

(The older man walking in the entry area doesn't really talk, but performs the function of the “hat check” character aboard the airship; use him for mass de-equips.)

And speaking of equipment, don't forget the shops. Setzer's best available weapon is the Trump (13,000 GP), available in the Weapon Shop. He can also use the Diamond Armor (15,000), Helm (8,000), and Shield (3,500). Now, that's almost 40,000 GP, and after your recent back-to-school shopping trip for Edgar, you probably don't have it.

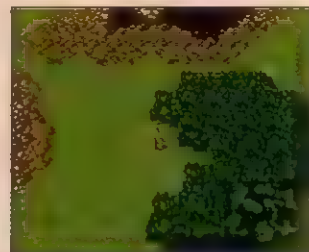
Roaming the North

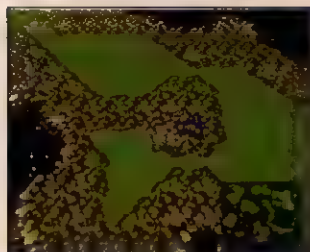
However, you do want to be well-outfitted for your trip through the tomb, where the monsters are not exactly laid-back, and this is one occasion you'd do well to spend some time fund-raising with the local critters. Not to worry. The surface creatures of the northwest are significantly less vicious than the ones you've gotten used to in the region around Albbrook, and the chances are good that many of them (like the useless Muus) won't even get a whack at you before they die. (The best opponent purely in terms of GP is the bulldog-like Bogy, who roams in pairs and returns 2,400 GP.)

Who knows, you might even find something interesting in your travels. Remember the hidden Chocobo rental outlet in the woods near the Figaro desert? Now it's in the woods off to the northeast of Kohlingen.

And remember the loon who lived on the peninsula north of Kohlingen and wanted to build a colosseum as a monument to war? Well, he's gone and done it!

The Dragon's Neck Colosseum is a decent march north of Kohlingen.





(You'll understand the name later when you see this continent from the air.) It offers one-on-one battles with a range of creatures. You put up a non-equipped item of your choosing. If you win, you get a better one of theirs.

It's a little early to get involved here. (Ultros, who's the receptionist, gives good advice on this score.) But, by all means, talk to the folks within. The imperial trooper in the lobby is the last person you'd expect to hand over good tips, but he'll tell you to talk twice to the Emperor when you find the spot where Gestahl concealed a treasure. (Hmm. Gestahl must be dead after

his fall from the Floating Continent, but you should have picked up a tip in Albbrook about a portrait of the former Emperor.)

Sigfried's in the room to the left of the colosseum gate and reports someone's been pretending to be him. (That would explain a lot.) The arena's founder is still a nut case — he's delighted the world's at war — and he'll explain Ultros's presence, too, if you check in with him after you've talked to Uncle Ulty.



Daryl's Tomb

Now that's you're armed to the teeth, make for the tomb. Setzer will open the tomb automatically. Head south through the foyer into Basement 2. It's a large room with six doors, and you're going to go through all of them. The lower right-hand door opens into a chamber with a chest containing Genji Helmet. It's a great piece of gear that can be worn by anyone; equip it and head north.

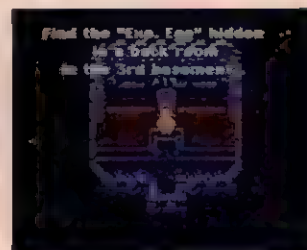
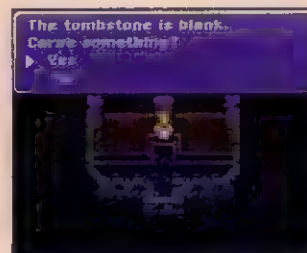
The upper right-hand door leads to a burial room. Look at the tombstone, and a door to the rear will open. Inside, at the far end of this long, eerily lit room, you'll find a button on a pillar. Push it, and water will begin to flow through a trench below. You've just stumbled onto the key to this place. Water makes the tomb go 'round.

Exit back to Basement 2 and enter the south-central door just opposite the entrance. The water has risen here enough to permit you to ride across the channel on the turtle's back. Do so. Head south through the room you find here — don't touch the button on the north wall yet — into another burial chamber. You can read the tombstones.

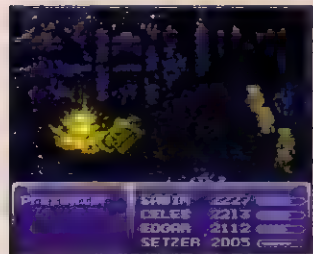
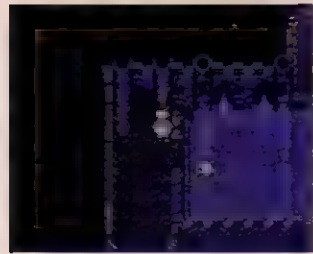
ERAU QSSI

DLRO WEHT

Makes no sense at all, right? Or does it? Return to Basement 2 and enter the upper left-hand door. Here you'll find a blank tombstone and have a chance to carve something using the four inscriptions you just found. Go ahead and try it out; it's not a one-shot deal. (If you mess it up, the tombstone remains blank.)

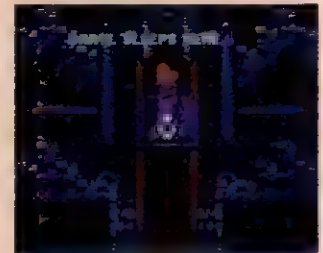


Notice that the inscriptions appear on the tombstone from right to left. That's the clue: Read them backward: lower right tombstone, lower left, upper right, and finally, upper left. They'll spell out "The world is square," and you'll be invited to get the Experience Egg relic from a hidden room reached through the east wall of the first room in Basement 3. This is a great find — Locke would approve — that permits the user to double the experience points received in combat. It's a great way to bring "slow" characters up to par with the party.

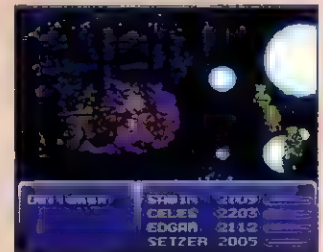


Return to Basement 2 and use the lower left-hand door. In the chest within, you'll find Crystal Mail. Equip it and descend to Basement 3. At the base of the stairs, in another chest, you'll find Czarina Gown. (It can be worn only by Relm, so don't worry about it now.) Go get the Experience Egg and return to the foot of the stairs. Head north, cross the shallow pool you'll find here, and press the button on the far wall. This opens up a door in the platform above, which you can't reach yet.

Return to Basement 2, enter the south-central door again, and ride the turtle across the channel. In the first room on the south side, hit the button on the north wall. This will raise the water level enough to permit you to ride another turtle to the otherwise-inaccessible platform to the right. Head north, bring the party up to full strength, and use the save point you'll find here.



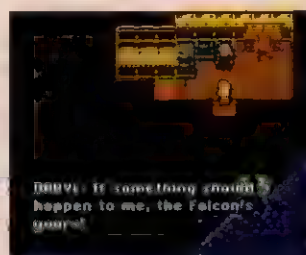
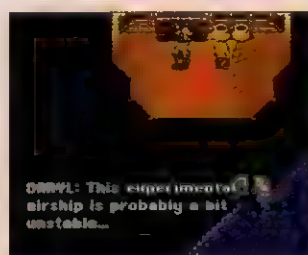
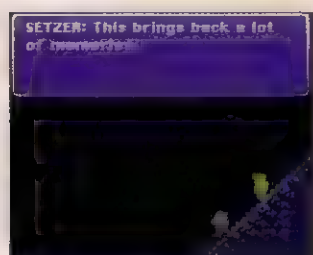
Why all these preparations — the fund-raising, the armor buying, the saves? Well, the chest on the left contains a monster known as the Presenter. This superhero relative of the Whelk possesses about 20,000 HP, high-level spells, and resistance to many of yours — meaning this is going to be a whack-until-dead combat. By now, your characters should all be at about Level 37, with more than 2,000 HP each, and while they'll get hammered, they'll survive. When the Presenter replaces its claw, you'll know it's on its last legs, if a Presenter had such a thing as legs!

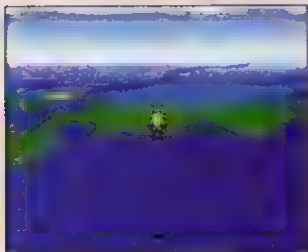


You'll get only 1,000 GP as a reward, but the real prize here is the Dragon Claw, which, if used in Sabin's right hand, more than doubles his battle power. It will permit him to deal murderous blows well in excess of 2,500 HP and will come in handy sooner than you think.

(By the way, lest you fear another world-class monster in a box, the chest on the right contains a good weapon: the Man Eater dirk, which does double damage when used against a human target.)

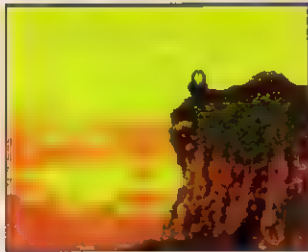
After that combat, you'll think you should be able to just waltz in and get the airship. 'Fraid not,



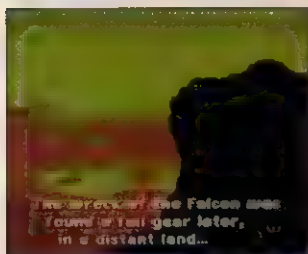


pal. The boxed monster was just a little extra. The boss awaits. Recoup any damage, use the save point again, and exit through the door at the north end of the room. At the top of the stairs, you'll find an elegant tombstone, swathed in purple and topped with roses, that reads simply, "Daryl Sleeps Here."

Something isn't sleeping, though: An enormous, purple-ish, wagon-pulling "boss" called the Dullahan has been awakened by your presence in the crypt. It has strength and abilities comparable to those of the Presenter, and it has somewhat greater staying power. (The same tactics work, too, and with the Dragon Claw equipped, they should take less time.)



Once you're done, the party will trigger open a door at the rear of the room and, led by Setzer, will descend a long staircase, with little animated memories of Daryl and Setzer attached to each landing. Setzer doesn't say so, of course — he doesn't have to — but he obviously loved this woman. Their scenes have the tart sweetness of people who are pals for life.



But life is short, and Daryl was ambitious. Racing with Setzer, she flew off in hopes of breaking records and being known as the woman who flew closest to stars.

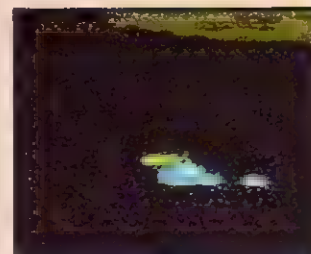
And she never came back. Setzer waded into the darkness. The wreck of her airship, The Falcon, wasn't found until a year later. Willed to Setzer, lovingly restored by him, then stowed



away so he wouldn't have to look at it, it's rested below the tomb ever since.

And now, more Phoenix than Falcon, it's been resurrected to put the party back in the game. Your reach again extends across the globe — into the perimeter of the Cult of Kefka's compound and even into Kefka's tower. (Indeed, if you're feeling really suicidal, you can try that right now.)

Let good sense prevail here. You'll need to find the rest of the party first — Cyan, Gau, Locke, Mog, Relm, Shadow, and Strago — and perhaps Terra can still be persuaded. But, for a moment, in this most imperfect of worlds, it seems like things are just about back to normal.



FINAL FANTASY III

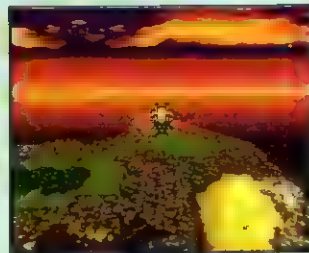
PART 7 THE ROADS NOT TAKEN: TIEING UP LOOSE ENDS



Maranda

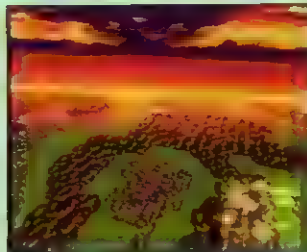
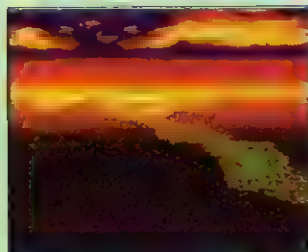
The party's barely aloft in its new-found airship when a carrier pigeon flies by. On a sudden hunch, Celes tells Setzer to follow the bird. He does, and that takes you to the town of Maranda.

Remember Celes's early hunch that a seagull wearing a bandanna meant that Locke must be alive? Well, her hunch here makes a lot more sense. The letters to Lola in Maranda came from the wounded soldier in Mobliz. But Mobliz is a wreck, and the soldier has died. So where in the blue blazes is this letter coming from? Set 'er down gentle-like, and let's see if we can find out.



You're on the right track. Maranda's a good time, and you'll have plenty to think about before you get close to Lola's house. That is, if you do things in sequence. But let's skip to Lola's house to get the immediate issue out of the way, then poke around a bit.

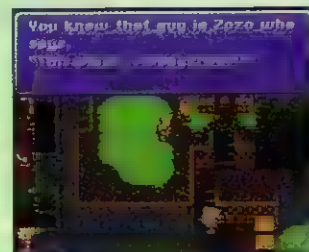
Apparently it's not just that one letter: The girl down on the docks (who's still running in circles, but by herself!) says there've been plenty, and you've only to walk north into Lola's to see that's an understatement. The place is stacked with handmade silk flowers, and she'll gladly hand over a packet of letters for your reading pleasure.



Here's the killer: They appear to be in Cyan's handwriting. (It makes sense. If you ask around town, you'll find he passed through not long ago. But one account suggests a far different Cyan than the stately, proper man we've come to like so well.)

Where is Cyan? There's one quick way to find out: Agree to Lola's request to attach a reply to one of the carrier pigeons outside, then follow its flight west and then north. It will land in a town enclosed on three sides by mountains.

Sounds like Zozo, doesn't it? Bet it is; a man wandering in the immediate neighborhood will steer you to the fellow in front of the Zozo clock building. It looks as though that's next on the itinerary.



The shops in Maranda are stocked with all the newest stuff. If the checkbook can bear the weight, you'll want from the Armor Shop:

- Crystal Shields (7,000 GP) for Celes, Edgar, and Setzer;
- An Oath Veil (9,000 GP) for Celes;
- A Crystal Helm (10,000 GP) for Setzer or Edgar (Remember, you already have one, which Celes will de-equip when she dons the Oath Veil);
- Dark Gear (13,000 GP) for Sabin;



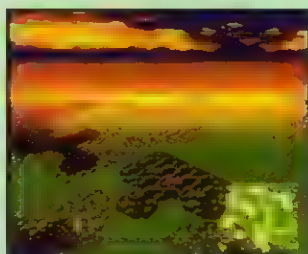
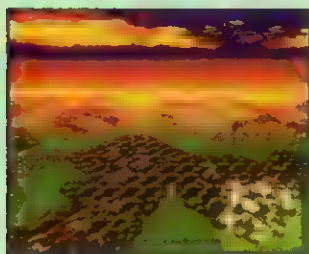
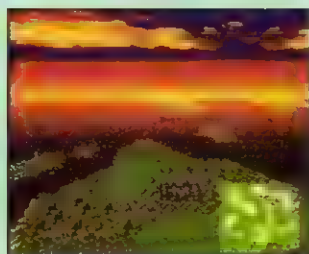
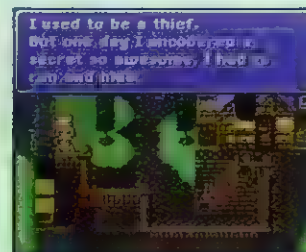
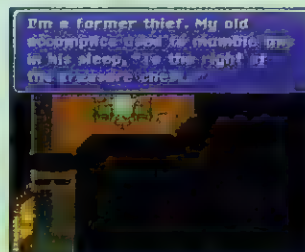
— Crystal Mail (17,000) for Celes, Edgar, and Setzer (yeah, right, like we've got 100,000 GP to drop in this one shop).

The Weapon Shop isn't quite so high-tech, but you can find Falchions for Celes and Edgar (17,000 GP); a SwordBreaker (16,000) for Locke, Relm, and Strago (where did those last two folks get to?), and the Gravity Rod (13,000).

As in South Figaro, a lot of thieves or former thieves seem to be hanging out in town, and if you can nail them down — some run around as if there's a fire — they'll be a source of good tips.

The one near Lola's suggests treasure can be had in the Cult of Kefka tower. The one staying in the right-hand room at the inn recalls a tidbit from a former comrade in crime. He mutters in his sleep: "To the right of the treasure chest..."

Don't worry about this just yet, but it appears to be a reference to a hidden trigger in the first treasure room in the Cult of Kefka tower, which we will examine in Part 8.



Besides that, the older lady who used to talk about her son — impressed into the imperial army — has been talking to these thieves and become a little geographic reference book. You can ask her about Narshe, the Veldt (Gau!), and Doma Castle, and in each case be treated to airship-eye view of the locations (along with their respective positions on the world map). Gee, thanks, lady!

Westbound

Of course, we're not going any of those places just yet. We're bound for Zozo and (we hope) a glimpse of Cyan. But that's a rather long trip, and if you follow the carrier pigeon's route, you're bound to come across some things you'd hadn't bargained on.

Like the Opera House, for instance. It's still standing (right at the elbow of the long, rocky strand west of Maranda), it's still putting on performances (though Lord only knows where the audiences come from; there isn't a town for miles), and it's still having ridiculous problems with monsters. This time, it's a Dirt Dragon that wants its 15 minutes of fame right now and is squatting at center stage to get it.

Getting to the stage is the first problem. The technique of falling from the catwalk that you used last time won't work here — and while the weight that Ultros tried to dump on Celes is still up there, it still won't move. Instead, head for the right rear of the building and throw the





second switch from the right on the rear wall. This opens a trap door under the party, and you'll wind up right where you need to be.

The dragon's not very big, but it's still a tough opponent, with around 30,000 HP, some spectacular spells that hit the whole party, and a brutal combat technique called Honed Tusk, which can raze the party in four turns. The only way you can handle this is by confusing him. The newest addition to your personal Esper zoo, Fenrir, will manage this just fine.

It's only afterward that you'll learn this was the first of the eight dragons you heard about back in Albrook. (Good grief, then what's No. 8 going to be like?)

Northbound

Turn the airship north and continue to follow the strand until it turns into a more continental land formation. Zozo is here, but the first place you'll spot is probably Jidoor.

The only real reason to stop here is to check out the portrait of Gestahl. It's the middle one on the left side of the gallery. Remember the tip from the imperial trooper at the Colosseum and "talk" to it twice. You'll get a royal letter suggesting you search for Gestahl's treasure in a star-shaped mountain range.

You can skip the stores entirely unless you just need healing supplies. The Weapon Shop has three unique items — Sniper and Crystal (15,000 GP each) and Partisan (13,000 GP) — and the Armor Shop two more (Circlet for 7,000 and Dark Hood for 7,500 GP), but if the party is well-equipped, none should be necessary. You can now find a Hero Ring relic at the Auction House. You already have it, and it's not worth the asking price.

But you might just want to drop by the Inn. A customer there will reveal that Doom Gaze can't restore his HP after battle, and that if the party just keeps fighting, it'll eventually win.

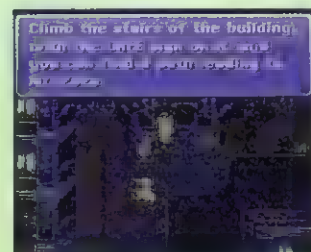
Zozo

Once you reach the main body of this southwestern continent, you'll find Zozo off to the northeast. It is still rich in combat and poor in people to talk to. And it's still raining. But the monsters haven't changed at all, and creatures who used to be the ruin of the party now can be reduced to sidewalk stains with one swipe from a weak character.

But, hey, at least they know what time it is!

You'll find help in a couple of directions. The carrier pigeon from Maranda is near the entrance. Touch it, and it will show you the building you need to pass through to enter Mt. Zozo.

Take the first street to the north once you get into town and speak to the man wandering around near the clock building. He's the one who used to tell you Zozo was dangerous. (Now you're more dangerous than Zozo.) He'll direct you to the building just to the south and hand over some Rust-Aid to open a door at the top. Go to it straight away because there's nothing else to be done here.

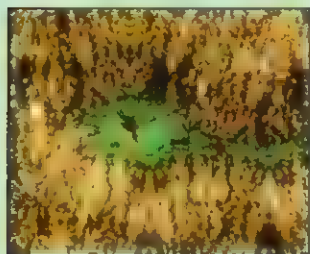




Mount Zozo

You'll notice something about Mount Zozo straight away: The combats give you tons of money. Knocking off even the standard enemy party of a Punisher and the Ursus will net 5,000 GP (plus whatever the Ursus swiped during the fighting).

Bear left at the entrance to find a chest containing Ice Shield, which Sabin can equip. Back to the right, and down a flight, pick up Red Cap, which raises the user's HP by a quarter. Down the stairs, right into the spotlight and all the way left, you'll find Thunder Shield (which, again, can be equipped by Sabin).



Now go up the stairs all the way to the top, where you'll find Aegis Shield (still another upgrade for Sabin), and north to a ledge for Gold Hairpin, which halves your MP consumption. (This is the prize Lone Wolf took from the seventh chest. See, aren't you happy you picked Mog now?) Have Celes equip this. Then take the exit to the northeast and cross the rope bridge.

Once across, and after a long tussle with Luridan — little pyramids with ill-fitting blond wigs — enter the tunnel, restore the party's condition, and use the save point you'll find to the west. Step on the pressure plate just to the northeast and you'll free a Storm Dragon — another of the eight dragons — from the chest to the north.

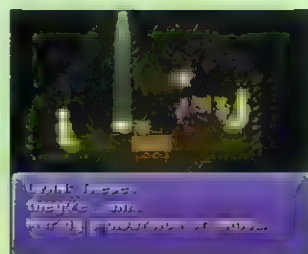
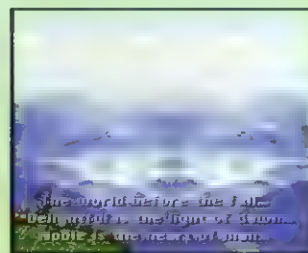
The Storm Dragon doesn't have the stage presence of its operatic predecessor, but it does have a whole lot of HP (in the neighborhood of 40,000), and you'll want to keep Sabin in peak form to hack a path through. Once you win, you'll get Force Armor (which isn't of use immediately). Bear south and downhill, exit into the light, and enter the cave to the right.

Hmmm. Handmade silk flowers, a letter asking forgiveness... looks like you've reached your destination! Out the right-hand exit, you'll find Cyan sending off another carrier pigeon. He's tickled to find you alive and immediately rejoins the band. But he's immensely embarrassed to learn that you've seen his flowers ("merely a diversion of mine") and letters to Lola ("something inside me snapped"). Poor, compassionate Cyan. You have to pity the guy.

He also brings news of Gau (Sir Gau, in CyanSpeak), who told Cyan he had to grow stronger to face Kefka and has probably returned to the Veldt to do so.

One issue remains: This locked chest of Cyan's. More flowers, ya big lug?

Actually, it's an even bigger surprise. Go back to the ledge and look for a pale blue glimmer in the upper left-hand corner of the screen. That's the key. Grab it and open the chest to get the Machinery Manual and Book of Secrets. Now you've seen everything: Cyan, the technology hater, getting into gadgets! Both will turn up on your rare items menu. Exit as you entered and find your way back to Zozo and the Falcon.



The Falcon

Now, don't freak if you don't see Cyan right away when you reboard the airship. Remember, he wasn't around when you acquired this beauty, and he may be checking out the sights. Come to think of it, that's not a bad idea. The Falcon's flight deck may seem longer than on Setzer's craft, but the ship is much smaller and less well-appointed (it still has a "hat check" function, but no shops), and it is decorated with more of a woman's touch than a gambler's. (Check out the rather presidential little parlor to the right of the entrance.)

You can find inactive party members in the lounge down the steps and the engine room's down the ladder at the far left.

That's where you'll find Cyan, who apparently has overcome his fear of machines. Have him join the active party and see how well he can be outfitted from the existing stock of castoffs from the other four. Hmmm, not bad, Cyan, not bad at all, but you know, we could get you fixed up even better back in Maranda, where you also have some unfinished business, friend.

See, one of the nice side effects of the trip to Mount Zozo is that the party is now rich beyond its wildest dreams just from routine combats. If you left Maranda all tapped out, you should return with about 120,000 GP in pocket. This means you can now buy Crystal Mail and Shield for Cyan and anyone else who doesn't have it.

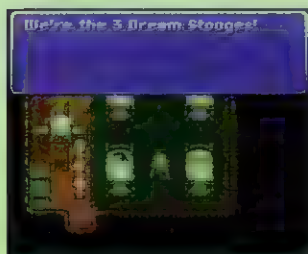


A visit to Lola's is also in order. Lola's no dummy and knows the letters weren't from her boyfriend. Cyan can offer an explanation of sorts, without actually admitting to the impersonation. He also swaps the unmailed confession with the letter on the rear table so Lola will ultimately learn her boyfriend's fate. (The woman walking to the southwest, near the river, will also speak to Cyan directly on the same subject.)

Doma Demons

Now, you can either go looking for Gau or give a Cyan chance to confront his demons. No offense, Gau, but the big guy is more important to the party's success, so he's top priority.

By now, you've probably heard reports from two passersby about demons attacking sleepers in Doma Castle. Yet when you visit, there's no evidence of demons (or anything else, for that matter).



They're there, all right, but you need to coax them out. You'll need to enter the castle with a full, four-member party — one including Cyan — and spend the night in the dormitory in the west wing.

You'll be visited by three tiny boys named, uh, Curly, Larry, and Moe. (They call themselves the 3 Dream Stooges.) They lay claim to Cyan's soul and hop into his dream. Fortunately, the party's on hand for this little scene and follows the stooges into Cyan's unconscious.



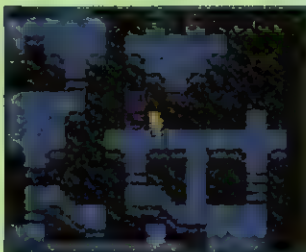
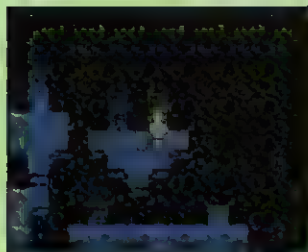
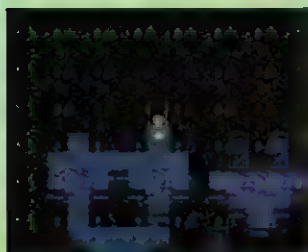
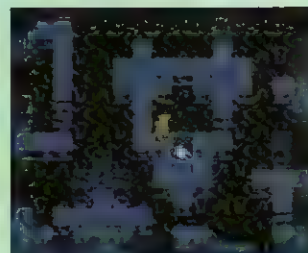
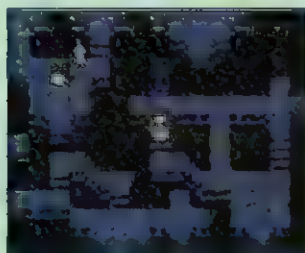
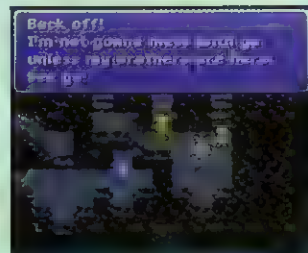
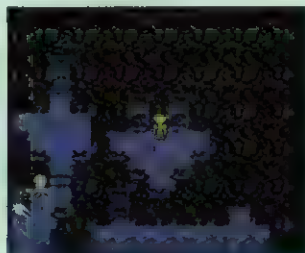
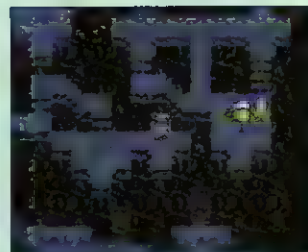
It's a very strange place — like a surreal painting, with platforms, stairways, and teleports over an undulating backdrop. You'll arrive controlling only one party member, but will see another off to the east and another to the northwest — each guarded by one of the stooges.

There's no sign of Cyan, however.

Climb the stairs and you'll find three teleports. The right-hand one takes you to two more, and the right-hand one of these will land you just north of one of your characters. The stooge refuses to fight you until he's with his brothers — a pleasant change of tactics — and vanishes.

So now you're a party of two. Use the teleport to the north, and then the one to the north again on your arrival. This brings you back to your starting point. Save your game, climb the stairs again, and use the left teleport to find your third member and another stooge brother backing off from combat.

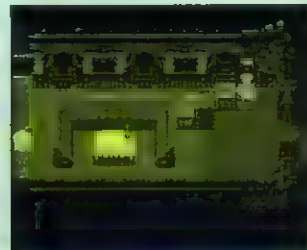
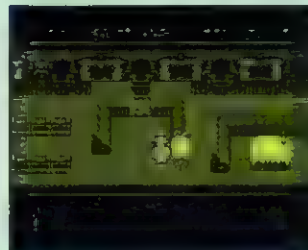
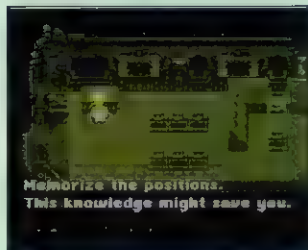
Say, this is easy! Use the teleports to the north, northeast, east, and west. Then climb the stairs to the west and use the teleport in the middle of the platform. Follow the stairs down to the central teleport and you'll bump into the stooges coming out. They're not much competition for your seasoned outfit, but they have staying power. The topmost character is handy with the Life 2 spell, so give him what-for first (or better still, try to knock the stooges off all at once).





Now you can enter the teleport freely and... well, this is familiar! You're aboard the Phantom Train again. (Remember, this is Cyan's dream, and the last time he saw his departed wife and child, they were boarding this choo-choo.) Head left (use the save point), and in the gap between the cars you'll come upon Cyan himself, jumping clumsily and being pursued by a specter.

You can't help him yet, and in the lengthy puzzle sequence that begins in the next car to the left, you'll struggle to even help yourself. The problems are pretty much separate from one another, so attack them one by one.



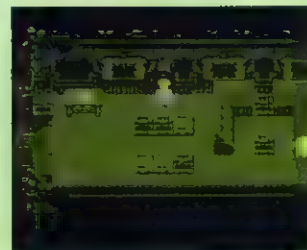
- 1) The chest at the right end of the car becomes accessible when you pull the lever on the wall, but it's always inaccessible again by the time you reach it.
- 2) At the center of the car, a chest follows your movements to block access to another chest.
- 3) And who honestly knows what's going on at the left end of the car, with two rows of open chests, a lever, and a book that instructs you to memorize the positions?

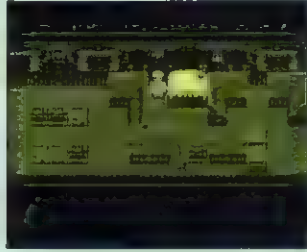
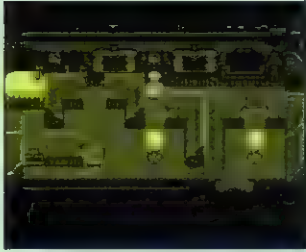
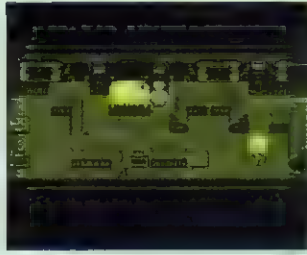
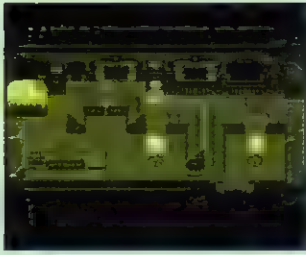
The first two problems are pretty simple.

To get the Genji Glove from the chest to the right, hit the lever and walk around the seats to the spot closest to the chest. Never mind that the chest is inaccessible when you get there. Along the way, you must hit a hidden trigger, for when you hit the lever again and walk to the chest, the chest remains accessible.

The chest that keeps getting in your way needs a heavy object to hold it in place. Go to the solitary chest at the left end of the car. Inside, you'll find a lump of metal. Return to the blocking chest, close it, and get the Flame Shield from the chest beyond.

Now throw the lever at the left end of the car. You'll see this closes the right chest in the top row and the left and middle chests in the bottom. Don't worry about making use of this information right away, but remember it.





The next car to the left is a sliding block puzzle, but with sofas and cases instead of blocks. The first lever removes the sofa from in front of the second lever, the second turns a sofa 90 degrees to clear the path to the left end of the car, and the third moves some cases and lets you reach that sofa.

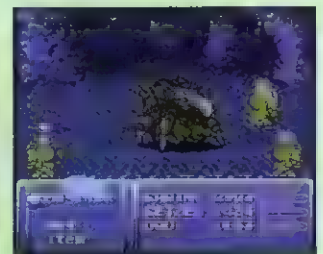
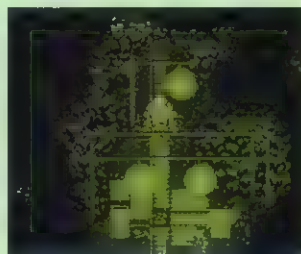
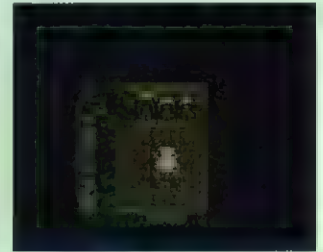
It's simple, but a bit tricky, as objects block different paths in different positions. The correct sequence for hitting the switches is 1, 2, 1, 3. Now simply close the chests at the left end of the car to match the pattern in the previous car and an exit will open to the left.

The next car contains only a save point. Don't worry. This does not mean something horrifying

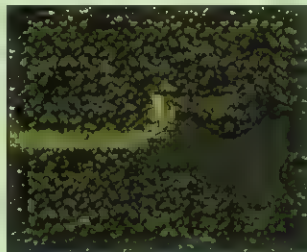
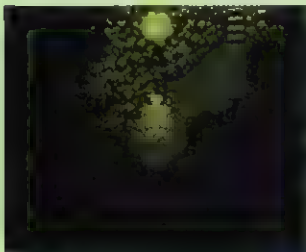
with 2 bazillion HP just around the bend, it just means we're about to switch tracks again. (This is one long nightmare. Say, Cyan, was that an extra-spicy potion you had for lunch, or what?)

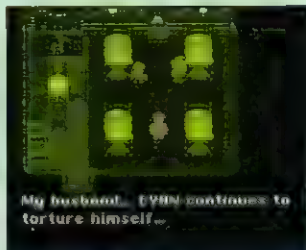
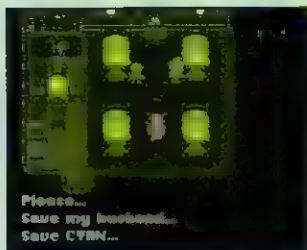
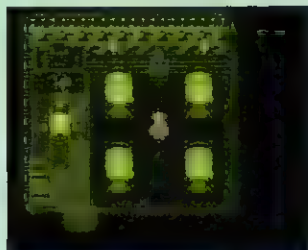
Enter the engine. Fool with the switches on the far wall if you like, but it doesn't make a difference which ones you hit (or whether you hit any). There's no stopping this Soul Train. When you exit, you'll wind up in Magitek armor in a place very like Narshe's mines. (The passages are broader, since you're a whole lot bigger with these suits on.)

There's Cyan again, off to the south, with imperial troopers in hot pursuit. Once they've cleared the south door, follow them. Use the Magitek armor for fighting here, rather than wasting your own resources. The only opponent of any note is lo — cousin to the underground castle's Lethal Weapon — and he's easily burned down with a few blasts of the Bolt beam.



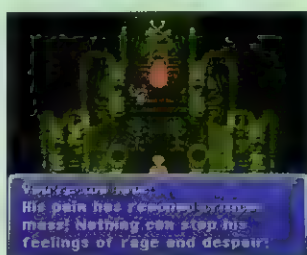
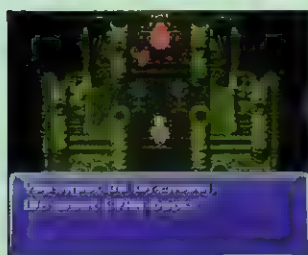
Hmm. These passages quickly begin to look identical to one another. You'd swear you were going in circles. In fact, you are. You can break the pattern when you enter a cave with a well-defined portal at its southern tip. Exit the cave as you entered, and you'll find yourself at the eastern end of a bridge, with Cyan heading west.



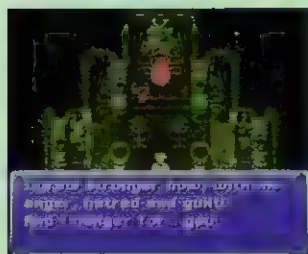


Nope, that bridge doesn't look very strong, and when you try to cross in your heavy armor, it will break, plunging you into Doma Castle again. Well, the Doma Castle

of Cyan's soul, at any rate. Here we'll meet Cyan's wife and son, who appeal to the party to rescue the tormented warrior from the Wrexoul — a monster consisting of unhappy spirits of people who died in meaningless wars.

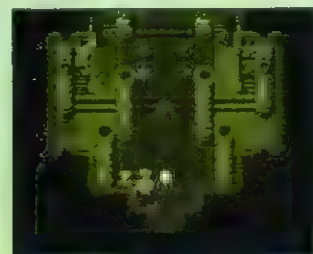
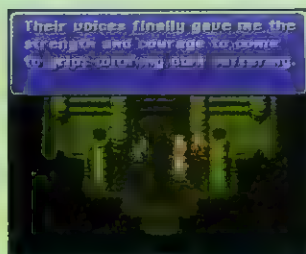
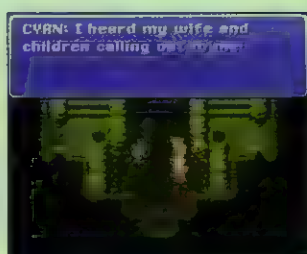
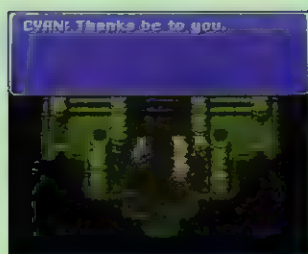


Use the save point they leave behind when they vanish, then head for the King's Room. Wrexoul is here, Cyan is unconscious beside him, and the creature evidently has room for desert. That would be you. He attacks, with a long spiel about how he'll appear to you just before you die.



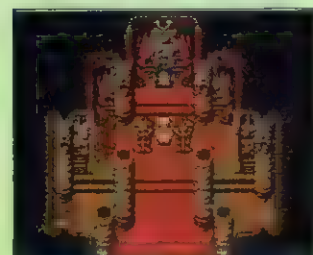
Save your breath, Wrex. He's a total nonentity when it comes to fighting. Just sic your combat Espers on the boss and his SoulSavers, and he'll be gone after two rounds.

And, after one final goodbye to wife and child, Cyan is safe and whole again. He has given up the past and the blame for things he could not control, and he's looking ahead. As the passerby in Maranda predicted, he is the great knight he



always promised to become — his sword skill is now at its peak. (Check out the ultimate in SwordTech maneuvers: Cleave.)

But don't leave Doma quite yet. Was that a Magicite shard you spotted at the far end of the King's Room in Cyan's dream? Could it have made the transition with the party back to the real world? It could, and it did! Take the Alexander shard from the throne. It allows the bearer to learn five spells (including Pearl) and gives the party a devastating Mystic Purity attack in combat.





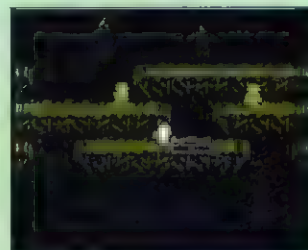
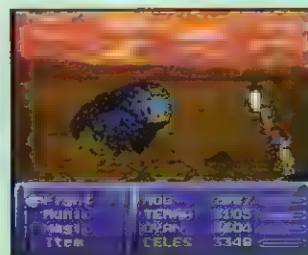
Waiting for Gogo

Now, here's something you could easily miss and never know it. Once the Doma Castle adventure is complete, you can go back to the character in Thamasa who told you about the demons and get a whole new mission. He'll now tell you about an island off to the north where there lives a strange, sucking creature. What would happen if you were sucked inside, he wonders.

Why not find out? Set down on the large island off the eastern coast of the northeast continent. It's the same one where you found Intangir in the first half of the game, and it's now inhabited only by a large, shaggy creature called the Zone Eater.

The Zone Eater can be defeated in combat, but the trick here is to let it beat you. It won't fight the party so much as consume it, and you'll wake up in what's either a lair or a very big stomach.

Head down the stairs to the south, then west, and try to hop on the bridges. Take a lesson from your experience with the Zone Eater and let the little men in green knock you off; you'll fall to a lower level. Get Ether and Red Jacket (good armor for Sabin or Edgar) from the chests and step on the pressure plate to the east. This lowers blocking terrain to the east and permits you to return to the second level.



Now try your luck with the bridges again, but more carefully: Hop between bridges only when the little man in green is at the far end of your destination bridge.

On your way over, open the chests and get Genji Armor (which Terra can use) and Magical Brush (for Relm). The chest to the far west, reached only from the southern bridge, contains Fake Mustache, which upgrades Relm's Sketch command to Control.

Get it, too, but be careful — this involves some quick, well-timed running and jumping (unusual for FF3). To get back from this chest, it's easiest just to let the little man in green knock you off the bridge again.

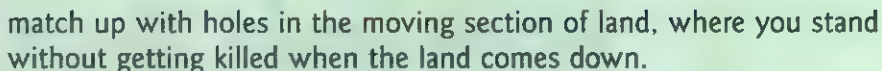
Exit to the stairs by the northernmost bridge and use the save point you'll find here.

You did save, right? Promise? OK, good, because the next room is also unusual for FF3: a real deathtrap that again emphasizes speed and agility.

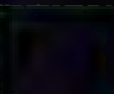
(You'll need the Sprint Shoes relic equipped to make it safely.)

Fortunately, you can watch this trap in operation before you try it. A huge section of land alternately rises and falls atop a lower section dotted with chests. Along the way, there are just a handful of "safe" points — spots that






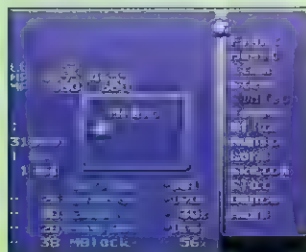
And the last chest (Tack Stars) has no such safe point. You've got to run to the chest, grab the prize, and run like crazy for the exit to the south.



Shrouded in odd clothing,
...is this a man...?
...a woman...?
...or should we ask...?

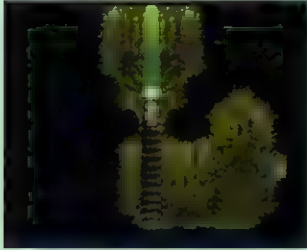


When I leave you, you are saying
 "I'm leaving. I'm going away."
 "I'm going to leave."
 When do we leave?





Is Gogo man or woman? Only he or she knows. Gogo can imitate anything under the sun. Specialty: Mimic.



So where's the exit that usually opens and pops us back to the surface? Um, seems there isn't one. You'll have to go back through the maze again.

Despite the problems you might have had getting in, getting out is actually easier than it sounds. The only catch is that, in the falling-land puzzle, you can't even see the unmarked safe point from where you start. Don't try to estimate its location. Go straight back to the spot south of the Hero Ring chest as soon as the land rises. To exit, go back to the spot where you arrived, then go up the stairs and stand in the shaft of light.

The Veldt

OK, we've kept Gau on hold about long enough, don't you think? Take only a three-member party this time — you'll see why in a sec — and land near the cave in the far south. A dog appears when you enter and seems to want you to follow it. (What's that, Lassie? Timmy fell down a well and has three broken ribs?) Follow it.

Actually, finding Gau is the easy part. If you're foggy on how it was handled the first time, talk to the hunters around the fire just to the east. Their stories will recall the ones you heard about the kid in Mobliz before he joined up: "a weird kid dressed in hides," who never approached the hunters when the four were together. That's a clue, and the fourth hunter, farthest from the fire, will make it concrete: Don't approach him with a full party. (The hunters will also let you in on the whereabouts of another dragon: the forest north of the Veldt. This is a red herring, as we'll see later.)

Go outside, walk around looking for a fight, and Gau will turn up after the first routine combat. He'll recognize you. You won't even need dried meat this time.





Now, hold on a sec, though. It's hard to say what passes for "routine" combat in the Veldt, and you may have to fight for a while before Gau turns up. This area has turned into a wildlife preserve for the whole world. You can run into Behemoth, Imperial Air Force units, troopers, and even the Chaser — your final encounter in Vector after leaving the Magitek complex in the first half of the game. This is one place where you'll just enjoy exploring and seeing what remnants of the old world hang on in the new one.

The Veldt cave isn't just a hole in the wall, by the way: It's large, deep, and mildly tricky, with a number of mini-levels divided by small cliffs and overpasses that look like walls.

Start out by getting the Rage Ring relic from the chest to the northwest, and read its description in the Item (not Relic) menu for another clue for later in the game: Use it with the Sasquatch.



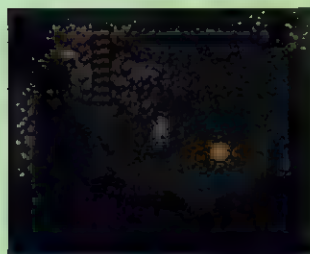
Now, head north, then west into the tunnel, and, in the darkness in mid-tunnel, find an exit to the south.

You can continue west here, too, but only if you have a strong stomach. The monster in a box at the end of the corridor is an Allo Ver — no, he doesn't have a fellow monster named Lanolin! — who's very good with the soul-robbing Doom spell. Use Life spells as protection and the Fenrir or Phantom Esper to slow down his progress. The Tiger Claw you'll get when it's over is a great weapon for Sabin.

Continue south through several rooms (one of which won't appear to have a south exit until you try it) and down staircases until you come to a room with an eastern exit blocked by rocks. In the room just to the south, use the lever on the north wall to clear away the rocks and continue south to collect the Striker dirk. (Be sure to keep this; it's the only way to get Shadow back into the party later in the game.)

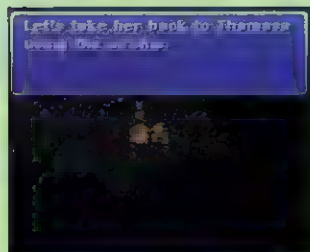
Then head north again, through that once-blocked eastern door, and down the stairs to the south.

Hey! That looks like Relm up there to the east! (If you were a real hero at the end of Part 5, you'll find Shadow instead, and Relm will turn up later in the game.) She's either asleep or hurt — no way to tell from down here — and there's a dog beside her. Could that be Interceptor?



Find a way up there. Make your way around to the northern exit, down the stairs, and north to a save point. (The Toe Cutters here — the only monster native to the cave, aside from the rare Rhyos — wouldn't be a threat unless the party was stark naked, but two intimidating critters are still to come.)

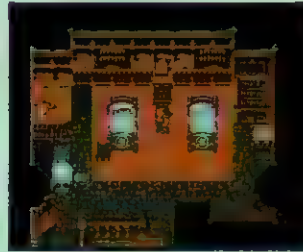
Exit to the west. You'll approach the fallen girl automatically. Oh, gee, she is hurt. What to do? You have nothing to fear from the dog, but I wouldn't be so sure about the two Senior Behemoths who appear out of the south and fight the party in succession. These are grownup versions of the creatures you fled from on the Floating Continent, with 18,00 HP apiece. It's a measure of how the party has grown that they're no big deal. Just beat 'em down. Use a Life Spell on the second Senior Behemoth to kill it instantly. You'll get a Behemoth Suit (which will soon come in handy) and ThunderBlade sword in reward.



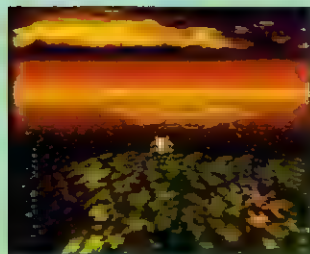


Thamasa

Relm's wounds are too serious to be treated on the spot, so the next move (handled automatically) is to airlift her back to her hometown of Thamasa. She'll come around briefly after a nightmare about her missing father. Leave her to rest under Interceptor's adoring eye, take a nap yourself (the Inn's still just 1 GP a night), and have a look around.



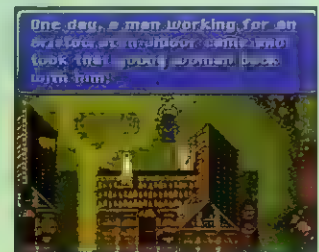
OK, you're back. That was short. There's not much to see. You can check in on Relm; she's back among the living, but groggy, and will stay in bed. Someone has sighted a fish-like monster in the sky; that would have to be Doom Gaze. And the stores have some new items, notably Guard Ring (5,000 GP) at the all-rings Relics Shop. (A few Cure Rings wouldn't be a bad idea, either.) It would be silly to shop for Relm without her along, but don't worry; the unused inventory will fix her right up.



And there's the real Ebot's Rock just to the north. Feel free to make a quick hop over to check it out. However, there won't be anything special about it until Strago's back in the party. Relm's the best way to get to him, so look in on the lively little girl and see how she's doing.

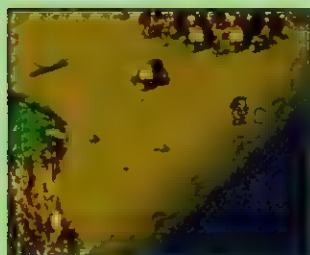
When you get back, you'll find Relm's no longer in bed. (Great! She's better!) She's also nowhere to be found in town. (Bad! She's missing!) If you ask around, you'll discover she's

been taken to Jidoor by a man working for an aristocrat. That's gotta be Owzer. We've been hearing a lot of talk on the side lately about his art acquisitions, and it sounds as though he's made another.



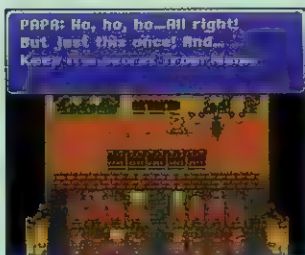
Jidoor

Go into the airship and back to the west! You're in a hurry to get to Relm, but the route to Jidoor will take you close to the island where Celes woke up from her coma, and it wouldn't hurt to check in briefly to see if anything's changed.



Nope: Letter's still by the bed. Basement's still empty. Magicite's still on the beach. What the. . . MAGICITE! Get it: It's Palidor. He gives the user access to Float, Haste, and Slow spells, and, in combat, sweeps the whole party away on his back. (It's a great technique for keeping at least some members out of harm's way, and you can then damage your enemies by bouncing on them on the way back to the battle.)

Funny. Jidoor, which has been a pretty sedate place for the whole game, suddenly has come to life.



On the way in, talk to the young woman walking near the Auction House, and you'll learn Owzer leaves his diary just lying around.

Within, you may find available for auction a 1/1,200th piece of an airship. That sounds potentially valuable, but you're up against a super-rich fellow here, egged on by his greedy kid,

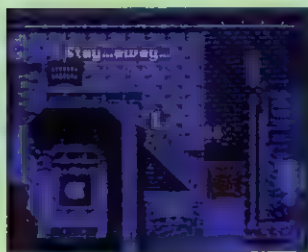
and you don't have 1,000,001 GP lying around to beat this man's offer. Don't worry. Like that Gold Hairpin, anything of use in FF3 will turn up again.

A word on the nature of the Auction House: It's a real smarty-pants sort of place, and it can cause a lot of needless anxiety. You'll never be able to afford certain items like the airship piece and Imp Robot. Other items may not be on the block as soon as you enter, but they will if you leave and then return.

So, for instance, if you passed up (or couldn't afford) the Magicite shards Golem and Zoneseek earlier in the game, you'll be able to buy them now. They both call on party-protecting Espers in combat, with Golem allowing a character to learn the Safe, Stop, and Cure 2 spells and Zoneseek giving access to the Rasp, Osmose, and Shell spells.

Keep leaving and coming back until you've seen it all.

Once the items begin to repeat, you'll know it's time to scoot.



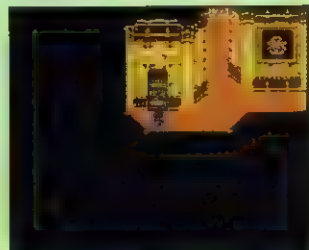
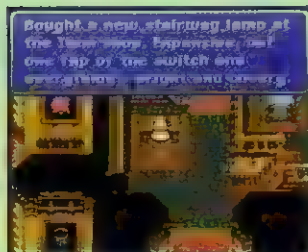
Finally, Owzer's House. You will find it creepily shrouded in darkness, and, when you try to climb to the gallery, a spectral voice tells you to stay away and slides you back down.

Yikes. Perhaps the diary the woman outside mentioned can offer a solution.

It does. Most books on tables in FF3 are just for show, but the one just south of the stairs is a multipage document which, between snotty references to artists, mentions a new stairway lamp; a new, large painting for which Owzer has no room (so it must be in a hidden one); odd noises from downstairs. . . and something strange happening to him.

Flick on the lamp and you can climb the stairs. However, nothing obvious has changed up here. You'll have to look at the paintings (using the A button) to sort things out.

Nothing wrong with the chest or with the urn, and even Gestahl's portrait is behaving itself. But it's the first time a still life of flowers has tried to beat up on you. Similarly, the picture of the "lovely lady" in the lower left corner will erupt into a pair of fighting fan-dancers (called Dahlings) when examined.





Behind the painting is a door. Behind the door are stairs leading down.

This is the most maze-like of the game's dungeons so far, with wrong turns often dumping you back to some earlier point. Hey, it's like the Night Gallery down here! (The dark pictures don't just speak to you. One drags you into it and installs you in an electric chair.) The left-hand door at the end of the hall opens on a chest that will provide a Mooglesuit (Kupo!), while the right-hand one. . .



. . . well, now we're hearing noises, too. It's the three doors just ahead; they're opening and closing on their own. Only the left-hand one allows you to progress, dumping you out a painting (of a door, ha!) into a new section of the gallery. (The right and center doors dump you out another painting back at the gallery's entrance.)

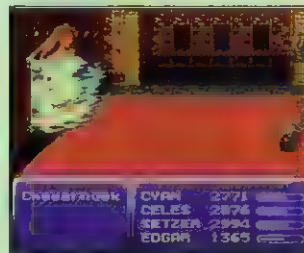


You're in a curious room with four chests climbing the north wall. You'll have to fight to get at each chest — with modest returns — and the center painting behind them to exit. (Talk about offensive artwork! This Still Life really reaches out and grabs you!)

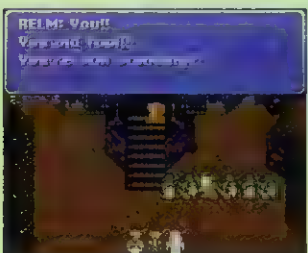
Use the door that appears in place of the painting and save your game at the save point. Use the right-hand door beyond that — the left one just recycles you back to an earlier stage — and climb the stairs to find Relm at work and Owzer begging you to remove a monster from his prize painting.

The monster, Chadarnook, is a real whopper, with 40,000-plus HP and the ability to draw protection from the woman in the painting. (She'll fade in and out periodically. Concentrate on the monster instead of the woman and

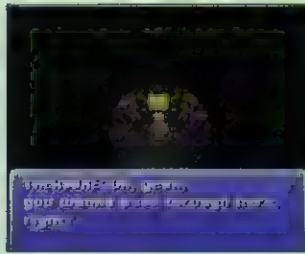
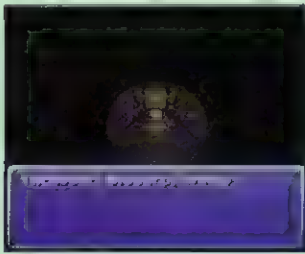
you will sustain less damage.) Owzer will explain afterward that he was inspired to commission the painting by a stone he bought at the Auction House. The stone, of course, is a Magicite shard — one you've never seen, called Starlet, which casts a great mass-heal spell in combat and allows a character to learn three Cure spells, plus Regen and Remedy.



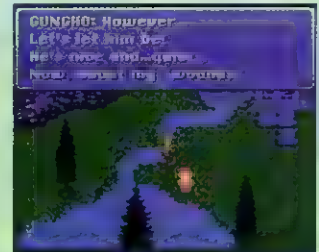
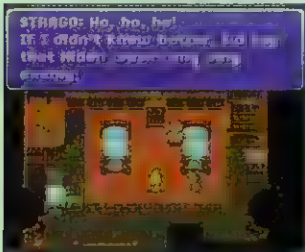
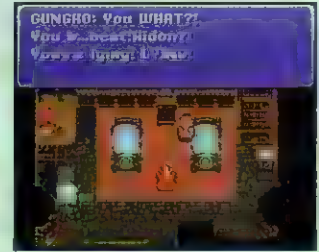
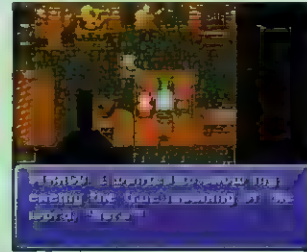
Cult of Kefka Tower



With Relm in the party, getting Strago back is as simple as showing up at the right place with the right person. Somehow, the old man's gotten mixed up with the Cult of Kefka and can be found walking about in monk-like fashion in the line of disciples at the base of the tower. Other party members won't draw even a ". . ." out of him, but



can collect far more), and with a little prompting, clear the path to the Hidon. The Hidon, despite an abundance of HP, baby Hidons, and ugliness, is not much of an opponent, and it does not grant much of a reward. (Note, however, that, as predicted by the man back in Thamasa, Strago has started picking up new Lores from monsters. In



this case, it's the GrandTrain, which is not only a knockout blow in combat, but just great to look at.)

However, this does mean that Strago can march home triumphantly, declare Gungho avenged, and carry on endlessly about his exploits over the supper table, even if Gungho's wounds do prove to have been a charade! Strago has been able to stand up to an old nemesis, and that always feels good.

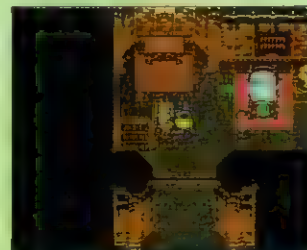
Now only Narshe remains on the list of Places to Go. So Narshe it is. However, it's hard to imagine returning to the frozen Esper without a critical member of your party: Terra, the mother of Mobliz.

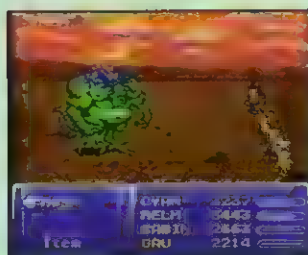
She seemed pretty bent on helping those children, but she did say "maybe later." And as any child who's ever begged a parent for anything knows, a "maybe" can often be twisted into a "yes."

Mobliz

So back to Mobliz one last time. Now you can panic: Terra's green hair is not in evidence. Nor are the young marrieds, Duane and Katarin. You'll be able to make out from the children that Katarin is pregnant, Duane is behaving badly, and his wife has checked out. But where to?

Actually, she just went next door. < grin >





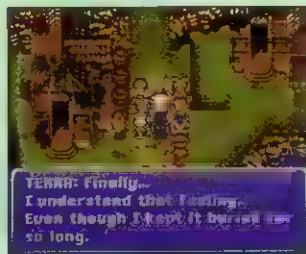
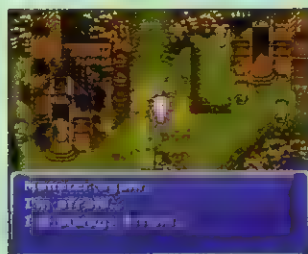
Check out the house just west of the "orphanage." Duane's upstairs. You wouldn't even know there was a downstairs if not for the dog that enters with you and vanishes behind the bookcase. Follow this secret passage down to Terra and Katarin. Duane will follow you; he's trying to make up with Katarin when the ground shakes. Phunbaba is back. Off goes the party (without Terra) to fend him off.

However well the party does, the battle won't last more than two or three

rounds before the demon turns on his "Baba Breath" (a variation on Mr. Chupon's Sneeze) and sends two characters flying right out of the playfield. This would have been a tough fight

even with the whole party. How are you going to get by with half?

There's hope. You helped Terra before, and now she returns to help you. She goes into the naked pink Troll doll mode and joins the party to whup the demon. That leaves Doom Gaze and the remaining dragons still to go.



Of course, she scares the devil out of the kids in the process, and there's the longest pause before a Cindy Lou Who-ish little one wanders over and says, "Mama?" Terra's learned to love and that things worth loving are worth fighting for. She is back, and after a side trip to Maranda to get her decked out in Crystal and Falchion, you're Narshe-bound.

Narshe

Narshe lies to the northwest on the north-central continent. (A check with the geography lady in Maranda will put it on the map for you.) It's still in a defile between mountains, and it looks as it always has.

But an evil mist is on the city. Monsters own the streets. Some engines have stopped running. The stores are either closed or vacant, and a pickpocket greets you at the gate with word that everything's been looted. Just one Moogles still lives here, and the only lock remaining would take a treasure hunter to crack. (Can you think of anyone who might help?)

As you can gather, the town itself is uncharacteristically barren of things to do. But the mines — now that's a whole different ball of fur.

The Moogles would have to be little Mog. Use the secret entrance to the mine to reach him. He's in the same region where all the Moogles used to hang — just north of the spot where Terra fell — and





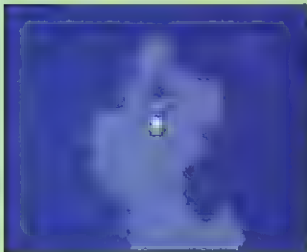
he's only too happy to rejoin you directly, provided you're running less than a full crew. (Otherwise, you'll have to go back to the airship to retrieve him.)

You'll want him with you here: Mog can recruit a muscular ally (the Sasquatch), but he'll need to be the party to order Sasq to help you.

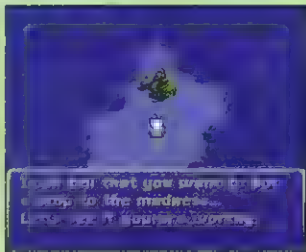
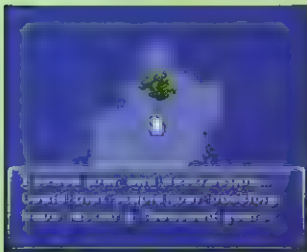


Oh, by the way, don't leave just yet. Check the spot where you found Mog. You'll come up with a Moogles Charm. This relic, when equipped by the little guy, brings those bothersome random encounters with monsters to an end. From here on in, you'll fight only when you have to. (If you want the random encounters to return — for instance, to speed learning a new spell — just de-equip the charm and all the Crawlers, Leafers, and Boxed Sets will come running to greet you again.)

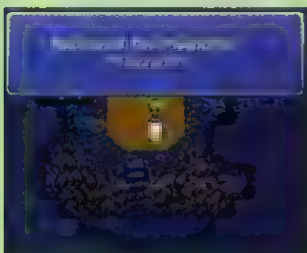
Make your way through the rest of the mine to Arvis's house and then up to the battlefield where you faced Kefka's troops in the defense of the frozen Esper. You'll find an Ice Dragon flitting about here. If possible, make your way north to the save point before taking him on, but if not, no big whoop either. He's fragile for a dragon, and a succession of Fire spells — Terra may have Fire 3 by now — will melt his resistance. Press on north to the promontory where the frozen Esper awaits.



Oddly enough, you'll have to fight the Esper Tritoch to free it (say, didn't we learn any lessons from Vietnam?), in much the same way you tackled the Ice Dragon. Use only magic here — conventional weapons are almost useless — and once you break through, hear what Tritoch has to say. The Esper senses the world's agony, and thinks at first that the War of the Magi is still going on.

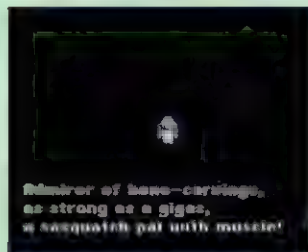


It identifies you as people of good will, however, and like other Espers, turns itself over to you in the form of a Magicite shard. It's a very powerful shard, too, enabling the bearer to learn the three powerful Level 3 combat spells (Fire, Ice, and Bolt) and, when invoking the Esper itself, to use them simultaneously!



The Esper also opens up a gap in the cliff behind it. Save your game again and use it. This drops you into a previously inaccessible part of the mine with some new operating instructions. (Avoid the discolored patches on the floor — they're trap-doors to a lower level, and some of them are barely visible.)

Head up the right-hand stairs, into the tunnel, and west to get X-Ether. Don't go south (the hall is trapped), but east to the second flight of down stairs to the south. Descend and bear west again to get the Gauntlet relic.



Head all the way east, up the stairs (ignore the lever you'll find here) and all the way east again to a dead end. Use the lever on the north wall and a trap-door opens, dumping you onto a lower level. Climb the stairs, have a look at the bone statue, and take the Terrato Magicite from its eye. It's another good one, allowing characters to learn three combat spells

that so far you've probably seen only

enemies practice: Quake, Quatr, and W Wind.

You won't be able to check out Terrato right away, however. That pounding you hear? Oh, it's just Umaro, the Sasquatch, coming to hammer you into the ground. Once you beat him (not a difficult task), Mog will get him to sign on — if Mog's not with you, he just moans — and the Narshe legend will disappear up the stairs toward the airship. Funny, you came looking for old companions and found the first new one since Strago and Relm.

Follow him, and you'll hop out the mountainside window you've been seeing all game. On the way out, you'll see Narshe is unchanged. But you got what you came for.



Umaro is big, he's got white fur, and he's tough as a dump truck. You'll see him long before you can recruit him.

The Star-Shaped Mountain

So, have you found the star-shaped mountain yet? To identify it, you'll need to fly at maximum altitude; the lower you get, the more formless the ground details will appear. Give up? It's at the northern tip of the main body of the southernmost continent.



Land outside the star and save your game, position the airship so that its shadow is over the green central square, and try to land again.

Here's something we haven't tried for a while: switching back and forth between parties. You'll need to make two groups from the current complement of 11 and switch between them with the Y button.

A few suggestions:

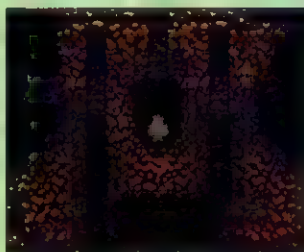
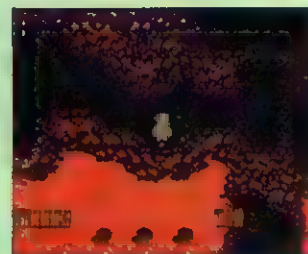
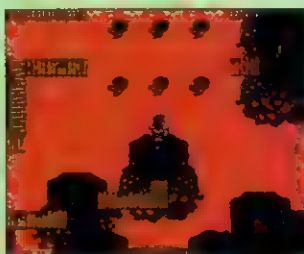
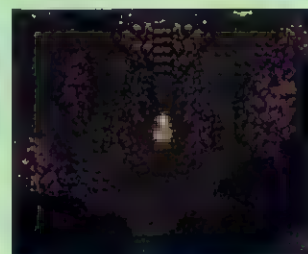
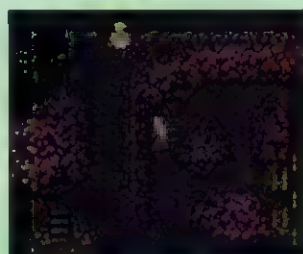
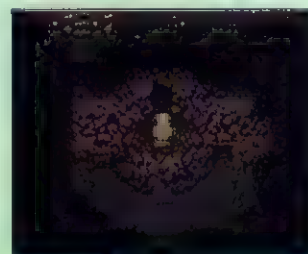
- Beware of just going after chests here. Most of them are empty (for a reason, as you'll see), some have spikes in front of them that can't be lowered, and some have trapdoors that will cost you time and energy getting back to where you were.
- Resist the temptation to see this as two solo expeditions. The paths of the two parties are tied tightly together. There's not much one can do without the other's help. Always think of how they can complement each other and coordinate their moves.
- Finally, the two groups should be roughly equal in composition: one serious spell caster (Terra or Celes); one or two ruff-tuff fighters (Sabin, Cyan, Umara); one second-echelon fighter with special abilities (Edgar, Setzer, or Gogo), and perhaps one interesting young flake (Relm, Mog, or Gau). We'll refer to them as parties A and B. All set? Let's get in there.

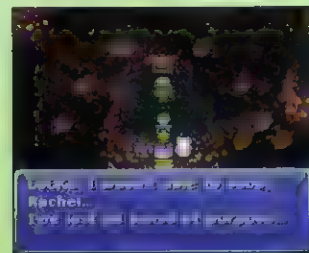
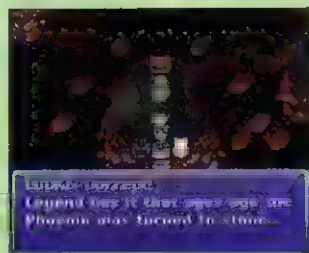
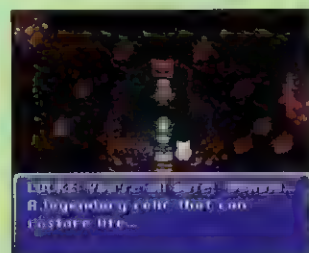

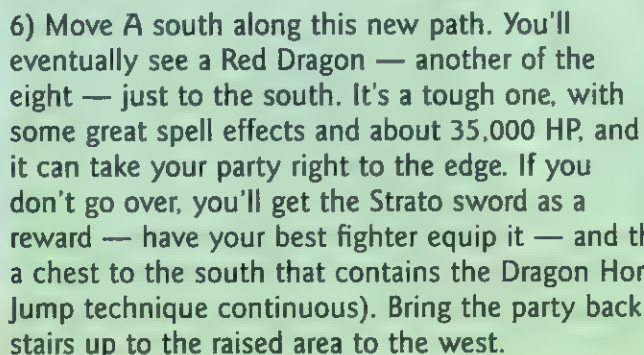
1) Send Party A into the tunnel and stand on the block inside, which opens a door to the northwest. Have B enter the northwest door, head east and south and stand on the block, which opens a door to the northeast. Have A enter this door. You're both inside.

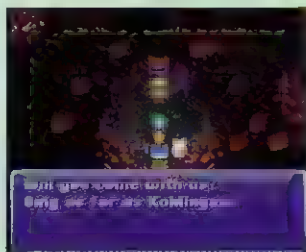
2) Now, have A move north and stand on the pressure plate. This lowers the spikes that B is facing. Move B past the spikes, then east and south to stand on a pressure plate. This lowers all the spikes in A's enclosure.

3) Move A southeast to find a Warp Stone, then go down the stairs just to the west. On this level (lava!), head west and north to a pressure plate. This creates two strings of stepping stones just to the north. Switch to B, and have the party move all the way west, descend the stairs, use the stepping stones, bear north and east, and stand on the pressure plate. This opens a stairway for A just to the east.

4) Move A all the way east, north, and up the stairs just opened by B. At the top, head west, descend the next flight of stairs, and step on the pressure plate at the bottom.



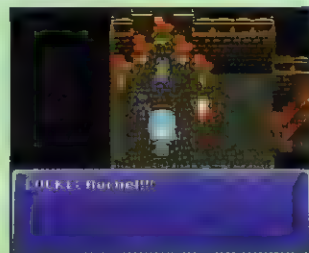
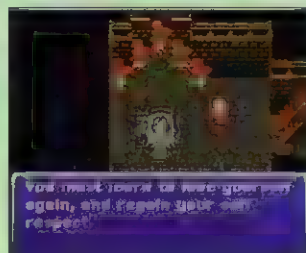
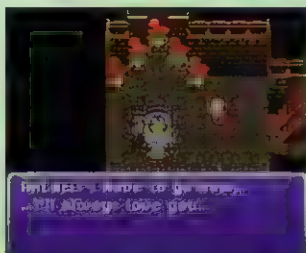
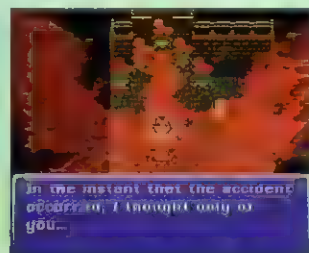
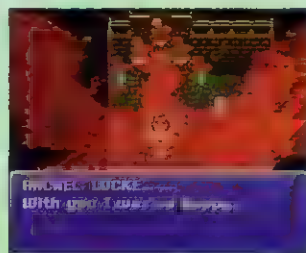
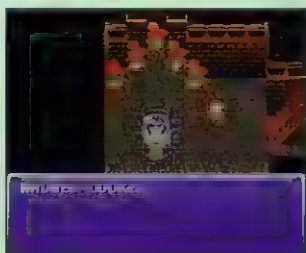
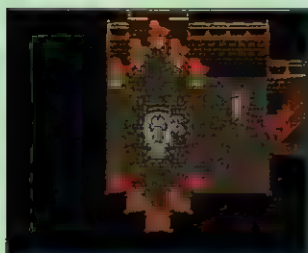




... Locke, naturally. And after the usual polite expression of surprise at the party members' survival, boy, does he get down to business quickly. He's just opened a chest containing a cracked Magicite shard (Phoenix) that can restore life — specifically, to his beloved Rachel, back in Kohlingen, where the party returns automatically.

An In-Tents Experience

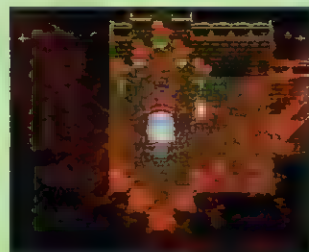
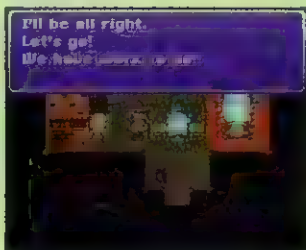
Here's a great healing trick for the multiple-party parts of FF3, like the conquests of the star-shaped mountain and Kefka's Tower. As long as one of your parties is at a save point, the other party or parties can pitch tents and recover HP and MP wherever they are.



The Magicite's magic works, but it doesn't last. Rachel has only a few moments to speak to Locke; in that time, she tells him what he has needed to hear — that she loves him, and that he must give up this crutch of self-loathing and recover his self-respect. She asks that Phoenix give his power to Locke and passes from the world in a blaze of stars.

Locke, a great weight lifted from his heart, rejoins the party gladly,

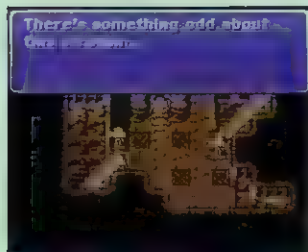
bringing with him an assortment of items old and new — not to mention the Phoenix Magicite, which has links both to life (the Life 3 spell) and death (Fire 3). No wonder all those chests were empty!



The Other Castle

You're not likely to find this major-league Easter egg on your own — Figaro Castle becomes almost irrelevant once you find the airship — or unless you happen to have the ludicrous 100,000 GP asking price of the thief who will tip you to it.

He's in the northwest corner of the Cult of Kefka tower's courtyard and will also tell you you're wanted by the Weapon Shop owner in Narshe. (See below.) However, you don't have to talk to the thief to find it.



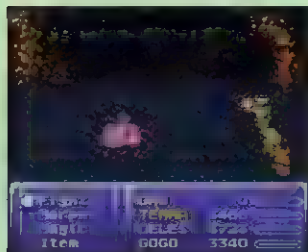
So save your gold, put together a reasonably tough party, and follow along.

If you try to take Figaro Castle back under the sea to its original position (er, its original position in this half of the game, that is!), you'll barely have crossed the coastline when the engine room chief will report the castle seems to have struck something. He'll give you the option of continuing on to Figaro or stopping to explore.

Now, given your earlier experience with the thieves planning to loot the stopped castle, you may feel this is the same thing happening again and walk on by.

It isn't, so don't. Exit through the rear of the easternmost prison cell (the cell door is open again), and you'll immediately see you're in a whole new environment. Get Wing Edge and Ether from the chests to the south (Doom Darts can be found in the room farther south), and batten down the hatches for what's behind door No. 3.

The room to the southeast contains a monster in a box by the name of Master Pug. He's a little fellow with just 22,000 HP, but besides high resistance to magic, he's got a bomb called Step Mines that will lay all but full-strength characters on their backs. It's a worthwhile fight, though, because success gets you the Graedus sword, which can deal toppling blows.

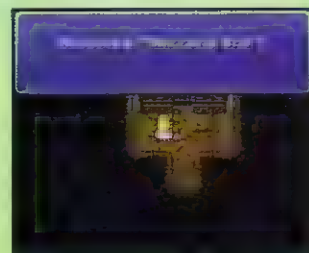
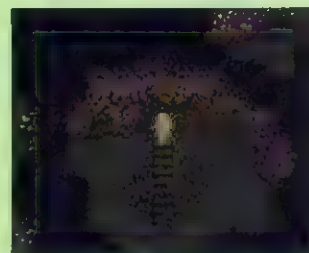


The west wall can simply be walked through. Bear west and south, and eventually you'll find yourself at the top of the stairs leading to the lower level (with X-Potion and Magicite in chests nearby). Descend, use the save point, and climb up to. . .

. . . oh, good Lord. It's an underground city (well, more like a castle) destroyed during the War of the Magi. Terra seems to know the legend — her Esper side, one supposes — and lays it out for us in flashbacks. An Esper attack. . . Odin, the only warrior available, sent forth by the king to do battle. . . Odin fighting with a great sorcerer in

the Great Hall. . . Odin, at length, losing.

And there the story ends. Still, the rumor of treasure is true. The room to the right of the outside stairs will bring you the Punisher Rod (which has a nice kick).





And the room to the left will, at considerable personal expense, give you 30,000 GP and Offering — a Relic that turns the Fight option into X Fight. The catch is that you have to fight another monster in a box — KatanaSoul — to get it. Ugh. Maybe you'd rather not. (He's a Samurai-like character with in the neighborhood of 35,000 HP.)



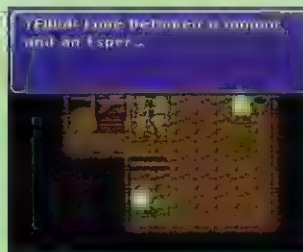
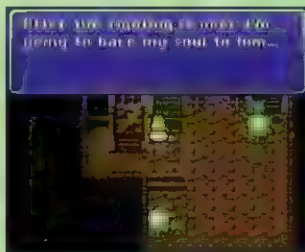
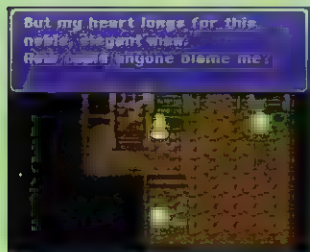
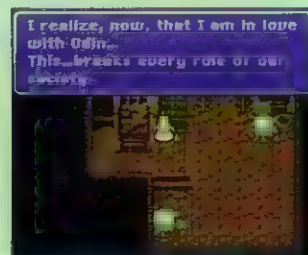
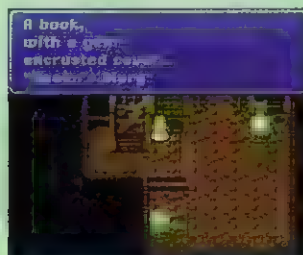
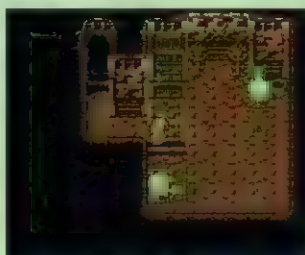
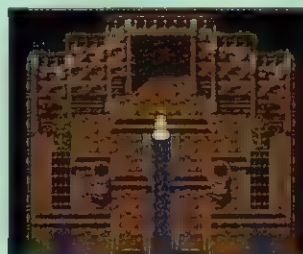
After KatanaSoul, the end is almost anticlimactic. You'll still have to watch your step with the likes of Lethal Weapon (a metallic crab which Drill takes apart nicely) and Boxed Set — love the names! — but that's the only real boss here.

At the north end of the Great Hall, you can approach Odin (who has been turned into a statue), and he'll become a Magicite shard. Get it. Odin finally gives the party access to the spectacular Meteor spell, and he's dynamite in a fight — causing many enemies to simply disintegrate.

Now, there is more to see here. Skip the left-hand doors, which take you either nowhere or into an empty prison (with some nasty combats). But the upper right-hand one leads to the Blizzard Orb relic (another one for Umara) and another Gold Hairpin, so both your spellcasters can save big on magic points.

Finally, the lower right-hand door takes you into the library, where you can retrieve X-Ether from a pail and read the queen's diary. (It's that fragile blue glow in the corner.) You sure are nosy, aren't you?

Read it closely: It's another tale of lost love — sadder still, for it was never given voice — from a magical war 1,000 years ago. It's all rather pitiable and grim, as is much of this portion of FF3, and it's hard not to feel a bit blue yourself here. Leave as you entered, and, back in Figaro Castle, have the engine room chief take you on to South Figaro, then back to Kohlingen, the airship, and your friends.



But my heart longs for this noble, elegant warrior.
And...longs anyone please me?

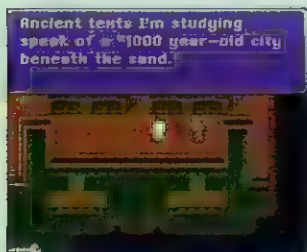
After the emotion is over, I'm going to have my soul to him...

(What love between a woman and an esper...



Return to the Other Castle

No, you're probably not satisfied. Why should you be? You probably feel that there's more to the underground castle — what would a ruined castle be without a secret room? — and you're right. There is indeed a secret room, and it's definitely worth a second trip to find it.



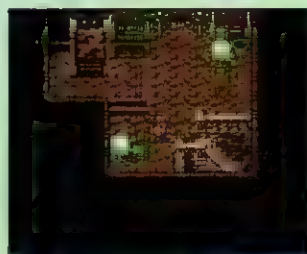
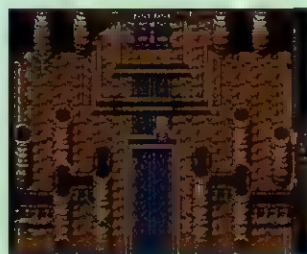
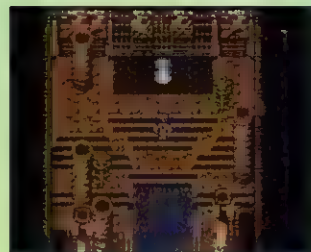
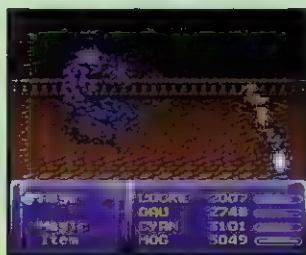
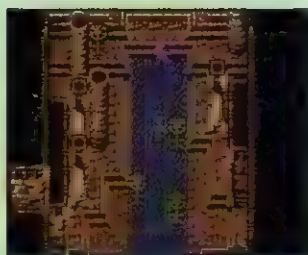
Keep returning to Figaro Castle until the prison guard makes reference to an ancient text in the castle library. Go talk to the wandering librarian, and he'll quote a mysterious passage about the queen standing and taking five steps.

Where would a queen rise to her feet? From her throne, naturally. Return to the underground castle's throne room, stand immediately in front of the queen's throne (the right-hand chair), and walk five squares to the south. You should now

be standing on the third set of steps leading down from the throne.

Push the A button. You'll hear a boom, and when you enter the library to the southeast, you'll see a set of stairs in the corner where no stairs existed before.

The stairs descend into a lower hall that is home to the Blue Dragon. He's got nearly 27,000 HP and an affection for the CleanSweep technique. But he's very vulnerable to lightning spells and just can't stay the pace with your little band. It's Bolt 3s for this guy!



That leaves just three of the eight dragons remaining. (Two are keeping house in Kefka's tower and one in the Cult of Kefka tower.)

After the fight, you'll get Scimitar — a very handy sword that can be used by Celes, Cyan, Edgar, and Terra — and at the north end of the hall, you'll find the lovely queen reduced to stone. But this stone cries. And the tear turns the Magicite Odin into the even tougher Raiden.

The castle will remain in the game, but there's no longer anything here for you. Leave this sad, forgotten place, with its stone queen and empty halls. Back to the world of the living.



Return to Narshe

That wraps up the obvious quests in this part of the game. But some loose ends remain to be tied up before you make the big move to the endgame.

Start in Narshe. Locke wasn't in the party when we freed the Esper and recruited Umaro, but we got a pretty concrete hint from the pickpocket at the entrance that a treasure hunter would be of use here. Now he's back in the fold, and another quick trip up to your old base is definitely called for.

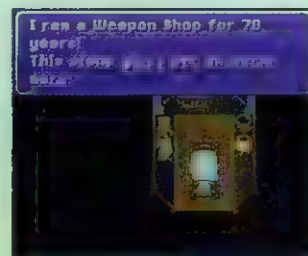
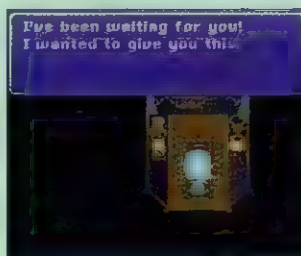
Actually, the pickpocket's hint was a reference to the mountainside warehouse, and you've already looted that building as thoroughly as it can be looted. But if you go back with Locke, he'll wink at the rest of the party and pick the lock anyway. Where else could this talent be put to use? Possibly at those locked shops?

In fact, Locke can let you into any building in town, but only two hold anything out of the ordinary. The owner of the Weapon Shop has been waiting for you in his back bedroom. He has a Magicite shard called Ragnarok and offers to forge it into a potent sword or leave it as is.

Tough decision! The sword he'll make is among the strongest in the game. But go for the shard.

Leaving Ragnarok as Magicite means it's available in circumstances where hand-to-hand combat won't do, and one of these is coming up real soon now.

Besides, the spell Ragnarok teaches your characters (Ultima) couldn't be better named. It's the nuclear missile in your arsenal, doing the maximum of 9,999 HP damage to a single enemy and 18,000 HP or more when fired at multiple enemies.



Don't neglect the Ragnarok shard's ability to turn enemies into items. You won't regret it. It'll take some experimentation to sort out when it's most useful, but here's a good starting point: It turns Samurai into the Offering relic — which, combined with Genji Glove and a couple of respectable weapons, turns a character into a killing machine).

Cursed Shield

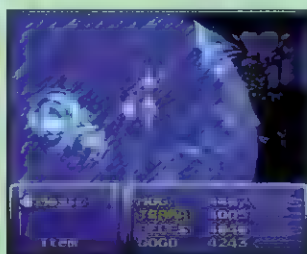
There is this one other item you can pick up now in Narshe — though you may wonder at first why you should bother. Go to the house just up the stairs to the east of the Elder's house. If you visited it in the first half of the game, you found it empty. This time someone's home (in bed on the lower level), and will turn over a Cursed Shield with a message about its defensive potential should the curse be broken.

How to break the curse? Well, the passage of time has been known to work wonders. Equip the shield (really) and use it for 256 battles and it turns into the Paladin Shield. Once equipped, this nifty item will translate many attacks into extra life (you'll take 50 percent damage from the remaining attacks) and adds seven to all your base stats.

Doom Gaze

You've wiped the floor with Phunbaba and taken down five of the eight dragons. But there is still the matter of Doom Gaze. Don't bother looking for him; he'll eventually find you. (However, I seemed to encounter him more frequently over the northwestern regions.)

You may already have battled this winged horror by now, but chances are it was a fleeting battle. Once it begins to take serious punishment, old DG takes to its heels, which would tend to support the stories you've heard that it can't heal itself. Don't worry. The lack of HP will eventually catch up to it. To kill it quickly, however, you'll need serious spells like Ultima (which you can learn if you maintained the Ragnarok Magicite as a shard rather than as a sword).

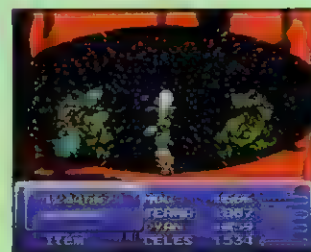


Once Doom Gaze dies, the Bahamut shard will pop from its mouth and land on the airship's flight deck. It's a good one — giving the bearer access not only to the Flare spell, but to an Esper who's very nasty in combat.

Meeting Gau's Dad

Here's another charming oddity. The hunters in the Veldt cave told you about a "frightful dragon" in the forest north of the Veldt. It's true, but this isn't one of the eight dragons. "Frightful dragon" is the Japanese translation of "dinosaur", and that's what you have here.


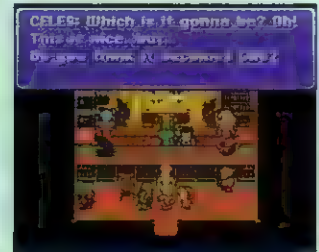
The forest to the north (shaped like a dragon's head) has a large population of Tyrannosaurs. They are tough opponents, and this may be your first opportunity to see one of the game's most gorgeous effects (the Meteor spell).



However, the really frightful dragon is the Brachiosaur. With 46,000 HPs and some nasty spells, it could easily qualify as a ninth dragon. Use Ultima to put it in its place and give the hunters some peace. And hey, if you paid good money for the tip about the underground castle, you may even be due a refund!

However, while looking for the forest, you may well spot a solitary house off to the northwest. Get Gau in the active party and pay a visit. This is the house where you met the loon who'd been waiting years for various assorted repairmen. (Wouldn't you know it? He's still waiting.)

The party concludes that this is indeed Gau's dad...and that Gau (who's wearing hides and all, PU) isn't exactly presentable.



SABIN: Okay, CAU?
Now, my father'd be getting
next to you that just
understood...

However, the man never acknowledges Gau as his child; he's just too crazy. The room darkens as he tells of his dream of a demon child, and how he left it in the Veldt, fled, and then saw a monster in its place. Sabin, enraged at this lunacy, wants to beat the old fellow up. But Gau steps between them. For this simple creature, it's enough that his father is simply alive. You're a good son, Gau.



DUNCAN: Leak out! Man!'
Gough...offense...
Bern...line and bench
Reggie was dirty.



Will the Real Duncan Please Stand Up?

If Duncan seemed rude to the party, maybe it's just because he didn't know you. Sabin's your only connection to this martial-arts master from South Figaro, so try again with your resident linebacker in the party.

Now it's a whole other deal: delight, hearty greetings, tears and finally a training session that sends the two men bounding across the roof. The upshot is that Sabin learns an eighth Blitz technique — the very potent *Bum Rush*.

Return Engagement at the Colosseum

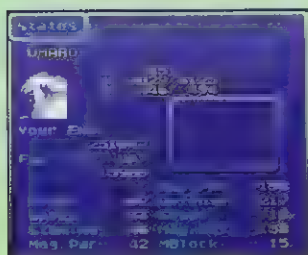
As the combat up at Dragon's Neck is automatic — this really isn't a fight so much as a puzzle. The key is knowing what to wager, who to use in the fight, and how to arm them. It'll depend on your party's circumstances, and so has been left slightly open-ended.

Basically, there are two ways to go about this: with subtlety or with brute force.

- 1) The subtle approach: Use the airship's "hat check" function to dump all the equipment into the pool, then optimize your most powerful character's equipment and hook up the best combat relics.

In our story, that character was Celes, and she performed well. . . up to a point. Her spell-casting ability was a problem; she was always trying to finesse the combat in some way with spells that didn't directly diminish the opponents' HP. (Why are you casting Cure on yourself after one hit? You've got 4,100 HP!) That meant more opportunities to get busted before she landed a mortal blow.

However, you can turn her into a regular fighting machine by equipping her with Offering, Genji Glove, the Atma Weapon, and Scimitar. She'll now deal eight blows per round of combat. Nothing can stand in her way.



- 2) If you want someone who can get down to business without thinking about it, that someone is the Sasquatch Umaro, who's big as Everest and dumb as a snowball. You can't equip him with weapons, but he can use relics, and unless you've been an inattentive reader, you now have two Umaro-specific relics in your possession: Blizzard Orb (from the ruined castle) and Rage Ring (from the cave in the Veldt). Fix him up with both and send him out. He's not invulnerable, but he's pleasantly to the point.

Careful what you bet. If it's something at all mundane or that can be store-bought, you'll often get Mr. Chupon as an opponent, have Elixir offered as the prize, and get slimed right out of the ballpark. If it's "found" goods of semi-recent vintage, you'll often get something special. Hence, it behooves you to wait as long as possible to visit the Colosseum so you can offer up the best wagers possible. (Warning: Don't go hog-wild here, however, as under the scheme outlined above, you have access to almost the full inventory, and it's possible to literally bet the clothes off some characters' backs!)



Colosseum Chart

The Colosseum is a bit bizarre, and a bit of a bazaar. It's the perfect spot to find the valuable item you accidentally left behind in some dark place (but aren't sure where) or sold to raise cash (and immediately wanted it back when you realized what you'd done).

The list of items that can be won here goes on for pages. Space forces us to limit the one here to those items that can't be found elsewhere in the game or are particularly well-hidden. (When there's more than one way to win an item, the alternatives are listed.)

Not all of the items are hugely valuable, but it's a great way to sample the odd items squirreled away in FF3's recesses!



You Bet	You Fight	You Get	Note
Force Shield	Dark Force.	Thornlet	Thorns on this helmet inflict pain
Thornlet.	Opinicus	Mirage Vest	Creates illusion
Imp's Armor	Rhyos.	Tortoise Shield . . .	Equip while an
Aegis Shield	Borras		Imp to create powerful player
Tortoise Shield . . .	Steroidite	Titanium	Equip while an Imp
Imp Halberd	Allosaurus.	Cat Hood	Picks up all possible GP
Titanium	Brachosaur		
Blizzard	Scullion.	Ogre Nix.	Sword uses MP to inflict a mortal blow; may break if luck is bad
Thunder Blade. . . .	Steroidite		
Scimitar	Covert		
Flame Sabre	Evil Oscar		
Genji Armor	Borras.	Air Anchor.	Tool makes enemies self-destructive. (Also found in Cult of Kefka's tower)
Cursed Ring	Steroidite		
Cat Hood	Hoover.	Merit Award	Allows heavy armor, etc., to be equipped
Elixir	Cactrot.	Rename Card	Secret item allows you to rename character
Merit Award	Covert		



- Tack Stars. Opinicus Rising Sun** Special weapon does same damage from back row
- Gem Box Sr. Behemoth Economizer** Relic cuts to 1 MP the cost of casting any spell
- Tintinabar Dark Force. Experience Egg. . .** Relic doubles user's experience points. (Can be found in Daryl's Tomb after solving tombstone puzzle.)
- Behemoth Suit. . . . Outsider Snow Muffler. . . .** Cozy armor for your furry and semi-furry friends Mog, Umaro, and Gau
- Relic Ring. Sky Base. Charm Bangle. . . .** Party has fewer random encounters when this relic is in use. (Gestahl gives you this item after banquet if you recruit all the troops.)
- Snow Muffler Retainer**
- Moogles Charm. . . . Outsider**
- Doom Darts Opinicus Bone Club** An intricately-carved special item that can only be used by Umaro
- Sniper Covert**
- Hero Ring. Rhyos. Pod Bracelet.** Relic casts Safe and Shell
- Cursed Shield Didalos Cursed Ring** Wearer of this nasty relic begins all combats with a fuse of 40-50 seconds. (However, use it for 256 battles, and it turns into a Hero Ring.)
- Ragnarok sword . . Didalos Illumina.** Youch! This is one of the most potent swords in the game
- Rename Card. Doom Dragon Marvel Shoes** Casts various spells



Colosseum Trivia: Note that the house doesn't always play by the rules. If you win, you're supposed to get an item better than the one you bet. However, wagering many items — like Red Jacket, Force Armor, Break Blade, and Fire Knuckle — simply gets you another of the same item. (Gee. Thanks for nothing.)

A few bargains can be had here. For instance, betting Fenix Down will get you a Magicite shard (the type that calls up random Espers). The catch: You've got to fight a Cactrot to get it, and this little green guy's difficult to even hit. Solution: Use Edgar to fight him after you find the Chain Saw.

Which brings us to the other key to success in this arena: Well, um, cheating. Consistently. After each successful combat, go outside and save the game. After each losing one, quit and restore. It's not exactly kosher, but then, having to deal with Mr. Chupon's juicy sneezes isn't exactly kosher, either.

C^hupon Clipping

Is there a way to beat Mr. Chupon in the Colosseum?

I've heard it's possible, but no one has proved it to me. Even a character with a naturally high Evade skill (like Locke) equipped with Beads and Zephyr Cape was swept out by the first sneeze 10 times out of 10.

And What of Shadow?

What gives with our ninja friend? That depends how you handled (or bungled) the escape from the Floating Continent at the climax of the first half of FF3. If you didn't wait for Shadow at the precipice where you jumped down to the airship, he won't appear in the post-apocalypse game at all. Only his dog will.

If, on the other hand, you waited, Shadow will appear in place of Relm in the Veldt cave. (Relm's still in the game, but now appears directly at Owzer's house.) Like Relm, Shadow will disappear from his sickbed in Thamasa, but you'll now get hints pointing you to the Colosseum. He'll turn up there later in the game — but only if you wager a dirk called Striker. (It can be found in the Veldt cave.)

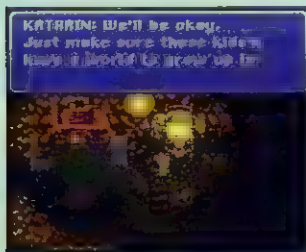
You'll have to fight him. Beat him — not an exceptionally tough task — and he'll rejoin the gang for the duration.

If you think that's obscure, get a load of this: When you stay at any inn during the second half of the game, with Shadow in the active party, there is a one-in-four chance you'll see a dream sequence explaining something of his past.

Four of these exist — one involving the mercy killing, at Shadow's hands, of a friend injured while fleeing a robbery. And in the fifth sequence, if you're very lucky, you'll see him leaving his wife and daughter in Thamasa. (A one-in-32 chance exists of seeing this one, though!)

Does any of this ring a bell? Shadow's carrying a secret. It's never revealed explicitly in the game, but you should be able to figure it out from the circumstances.

Odds & Ends



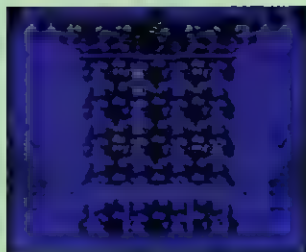
Finally, some incidentals. The party hasn't taken a "world tour" for a while, for there is simply not much in the way of odds and ends in the second half of the game. However, a couple of items of interest do crop up.

A third visit to Mobliz will find the blessed event creeping nearer — Katarin in bed and Duane watching over her. You can get Ether from the pot in the back of the basement next door.



Try hitting some of the other switches backstage at the Opera House. The switch that dumped you on onto the stage with the dragon earlier in the game still puts you out there — but to no purpose other than embarrassment. The party runs back to the lobby over the heads of the musicians in the orchestra. Do it; it's a scream.

The left-hand switch makes the sound of a dog's bark, and the second from the left turns off the house lights and puts the orchestra to sleep.



One of more obscure sources of conversation in the game is chatting with other party members in the airship lounge when making changes in the active party. Most of the stuff is pretty standard rah-rah, get-Kefka stuff, but Edgar returns to his old self ("If something happens to me, all the world's women will grieve") and Terra at one point seems to think she's talking to General Leo. (Get a grip, girl.) Cyan, future mechanic, can always be found watching the engines.

And, alone of the bunch, Setzer hangs out in the little parlor.



Leave him in peace. Make for Maranda and get everyone properly suited up, if you haven't already. You've got a big day tomorrow. It's finally time to take the battle to Kefka.

FINAL FANTASY III

PART 8 ENDGAME: GOING AFTER THE BIG K





Cult of Kefka Tower

And now, of course, there is almost nowhere left to go but up. Set the Falcon down within the mountains that ring the cult's tower and take a good hard look at your party. Magic will be your only weapon on the way up, so Terra and Celes are givens for the party. Gogo's imitating ability makes this character a natural. And then?



A fourth member is a good idea. If you've been using the Magicite shards right, you should have another solid spellcaster. If not, now's the time to cultivate one!

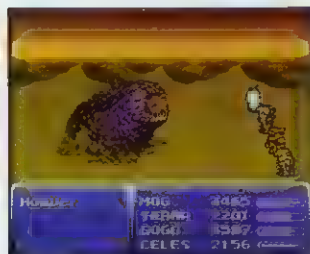
To quickly learn spells from the Espers, you'll need to equip the character in question with the Experience Egg relic you found after solving the tombstone puzzle in Daryl's Tomb and find a region rich in creatures.

The southern Veldt is a good one; as mentioned earlier, monsters from all over the game seem to have settled here.

But a couple of other garden spots will do the job as well. Consider the patch of desert southwest of Maranda. Here you'll find the Hoover. It's like the Zone Eater far to the northeast, except it blows air out (in Sand Storms) instead of sucking it in. It carries a heady bounty of 1,800 or so experience points per kill.

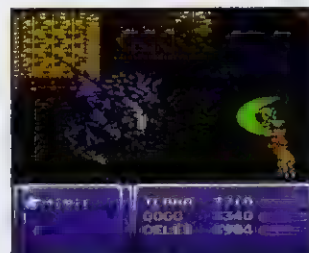
(While you're poking around down here, also check out a strange little critter called the Cactrot. He's got fewer than 10 HP, but he's very hard to hit!)

For all this build-up, the assault on the tower should be a modest challenge if you're properly equipped. (Cure and Wall Rings all around, gang.) There's no exploration. Basically, you're climbing a fire escape that runs up the front of the building and hitting the treasure rooms that appear roughly every 10 floors.



The Cult of Kefka's tower will net you, in order:

- The Safety Bit relic (protection against magical attacks);
- Genji Shield (which should be equipped immediately);
- Stunner;
- Pearl Lance, which you'll get after you kill the White Dragon in the Stunner treasure room (Bahamut and a couple of Ice 3s should do the trick with this one);
- Force Armor;
- And, inside the penthouse, Gem Box, which converts the Magic Command into X Magic.



A Towering Presence

The Cult of Kefka's tower has just one little diversion, and it's a good one. In the first treasure room, stand to the right of the chest and hit the "A" button. (This appears to be the "right of treasure chest" tip passed on by the thief in Maranda's inn.)

The room will shake, and when you exit you'll see a door on the floor below, where none existed before. Enter and take the Air Anchor from the chest. This is the eighth and last of the game's Tools, and it's a dandy. (You can also win it at the Colosseum.)

Another tower note: All those nasty encounters on the way up are random, and can be avoided by equipping Mog with the Moogles Charm and taking him along. (He's pretty fair spell caster, too!)

Use your most potent combat Espers — Bahamut, Odin, Terrato, and Tritoch — early and often, and be prudent in your rest stops for HP, MP, and son. (The Magic Urns, which turn up once or twice, often will replenish those stocks for you.

Make any necessary repairs and party improvements inside. Once you start down the outside steps, there's no turning back.

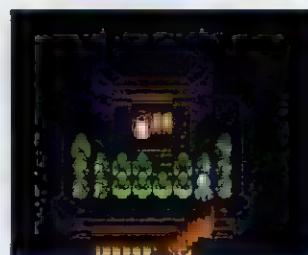
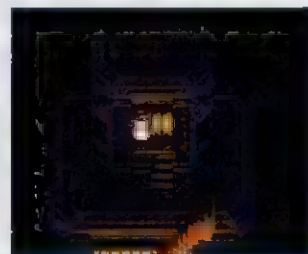
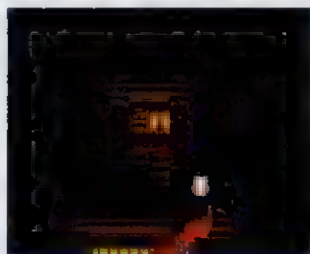
Take a quick hop to the airship, where the party can drool over its new prizes, right? Right?

Not so fast. Your progress and "treasure hunting" have not gone

unnoticed, and when you exit from the penthouse, you'll find Kefka's disciples have gathered around to demand back what you've taken. Over your dead body, eh? That can be arranged. Behind the disciples rises a ghostly figure. You're in for the fight of your life.

The MagiMaster, with 50,000 HP, is a very strong character and, at first look, a very complex one. He uses a WallChange technique to create a sort of multiple personality — meaning his spell weakness is never the same from moment to moment.

Don't bother trying to match your spells to his weaknesses. That's what he wants you to try to do. All this is really just bluff and bluster — provided you have a spell that destroys everything it touches. That spell is Ultima, and it will quickly carve up MagiMaster in 9,999 HP slices.





Unfortunately, like many monsters in the game, this yutz has a strong parting shot — he also packs Ultima — and its impact on an unprotected party is fierce and immediate: Annihilated. Bye-bye. It's restore time.

You can handle this one of two ways:

- 1) Cast Life 3 on the party in advance, take MagiMaster's Ultima on the chin, and then be resurrected afterward.
- 2) Don't just stand there while the hammer falls. Do the bulk of the damage — four straight Ultimas — without quite sending MagiMaster into his death throes. Then summon the Esper Palidor to carry the party off on his back while continuing to fight. (If you're using Wall Ring, MagiMaster may even help you out by bashing himself with reflected spells.) Only one or two members of the party will have jumped back to the scene by the time MagiMaster unleashes his return Ultima. You're home free.

Make your way down the tower and back to the airship with your new Megalixir (a whole-party HP/MP rejuvenator). You'll have to fight your way out, but that will now seem like a walk in the park.

MagiMaster Debunked!

There's a third way to zap the MagiMaster that's a little more conventional. How best to do in somebody who keeps changing his weaknesses? Cast a Berserk spell on him to mess up his system, that's how. He'll now be forced to attack you normally. Then use Scan to identify his current weakness and pounce on them like there's no tomorrow. Muddle might work as well.)

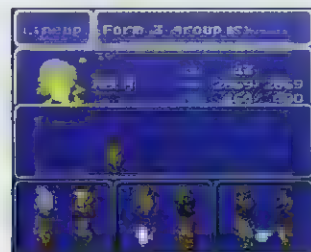
Ah. Stretch your legs, order a pizza with all the toppings, and break open a cold one. We're almost there. It's time to pay a call on Kefka.

Kefka's Tower

Kefka was a constant, almost comical presence in the first half the game — FF3's version of The Joker — but has remained out of sight in the second. This time, you'll have to go to him.

A few common-sense steps for the final assault:

- You'll need 12 party members for this last dash. Optimize every party member, then visit the prime Armor, Weapon, and Relic Shops and make sure everyone is up to snuff equipment-wise.
- Everyone should be equipped with Cure and Wall Rings.
- Max out all of the important healers (Potion, Remedy, Antidote, and Green Cherry) and MP-replenishing items (Tincture).
- The same rules apply here as under the star-shaped mountain. If any of the three separate parties loses, all lose, so take special care to keep them evenly balanced: a spellcaster, two





good fighters, and a character with special abilities. (Don't give one party all the good combat Espers, either.)

For our purposes, the parties will be A, B, and C. (If you need to make one a bit stronger than the others, make it C.)

Kefka's tower sits at the core of the great spiral of rock between Albrook and Tzen. You can't attack it from the ground, so you'll have to position the airship's shadow over the tower surface and try to land.

This brings the whole gang up on deck for the final comeuppance and sets off a mini-crisis. Celes notes that Espers rely on the statues' magical energy to live. What happens to them if the goddesses are destroyed? Strago knows: Along with magic, the Espers will vanish from the world.

And what about Terra? What of this half-human, half-Esper woman whose existence is the whole reason behind FF3?

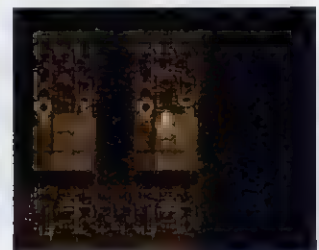
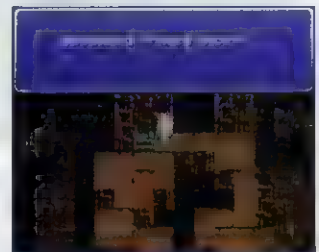
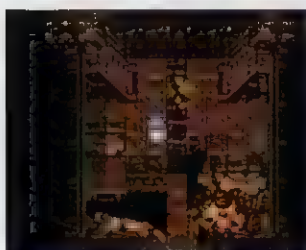
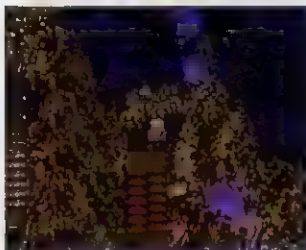
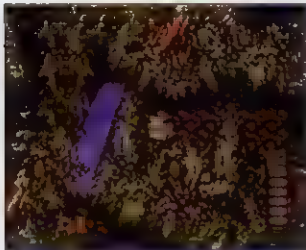
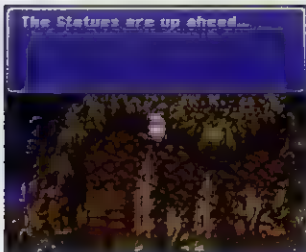
No one answers. Everyone seems to understand the risk. But the greater good is the objective, and plans proceed.

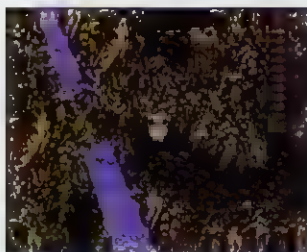
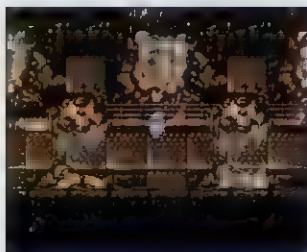
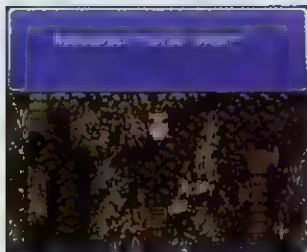
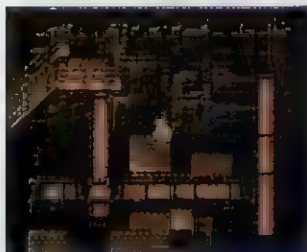
Now, over the side and onto the tower! It's very like the Floating Continent, but with an extensive interior — much of which will be familiar to you, if not quite in this form! The three parties will land on separate "paths" on the northern part of the tower's top — A at the left, B in the center, C to the right.

Bring Party A south on the conveyor belt, then east, and get Coronet (for Relm) from the chest. Use the door to the west, the conveyor belt to the south, and the door all the way east. Get the Fixed Dice (for Setzer, obviously!) and have a look round at your surroundings.

Whoa. This looks familiar! You've probably been wondering what became of Vector and its Magitek facilities. Here's your answer: They've been integrated into the flotsam and jetsam of Kefka's tower, but not in their entirety — in little pieces here and little pieces there.

Continue south until you find a door leading east. You're back in the Magitek Factory again! And you're blocked from proceeding further south. Switch to B. Bear west when you have the opportunity, get Minerva (armor for Celes or Terra), and head south to a room with two exits to your west.



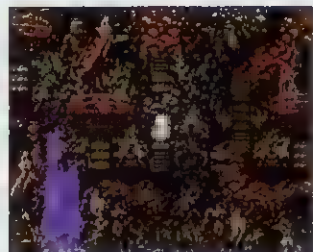
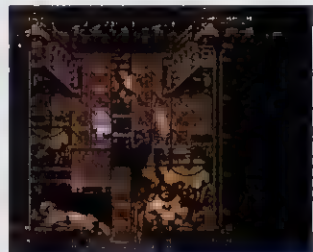


The north one will get you Tack Stars, and the south takes you into the right-hand cell of the imperial palace's prison. (The toilets don't work anymore; trust Kefka to let the details slide!)

The middle cell's vacant, but the right-hand one contains that bad puddytat, Atma, the watchcat you turned into kitty litter on the Floating Continent. Atma's a little beefier now, with 55,000 HP, but you're much better equipped to deal with him, and Espers and high-level spells should level him without much problem. You don't get anything for your trouble, but it seems Atma was standing on a save point. Use it.

The door out of the cells opens into thin air. (Told you to use the save point!) Pick yourself up and bear west and up the stairs for another scene from the Magitek Factory.

The right-hand pipe takes you back to the room where you found the Tack Stars. (It's also another shot at saving your game.) The left-hand pipe leads



to a chest (Force Shield) and a southbound conveyor belt, and suddenly life is complicated again, with several possible paths to follow. The one that will kick Party A along right away is the door to the west. Get Ribbon (a relic that protects the wearer from all status problems!) and step on the button to open a path south for Party A just across the gap.

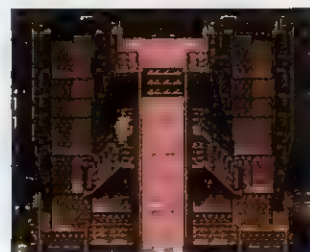
Switch back to A and head south. Ah, another familiar sight: the Magitek Research Center. Take the door at the far end and continue on until a rock barrier stops you from going any farther. You need help from the B team to proceed.

Actually, the B team has just about reached its own limit. The path west leads to a chest (Force Armor), but the eastern one leads right into the kingly lair of the Gold Dragon.

He's got a lot of weight in HP (around 30,000), but he carries them badly — being slow to take action and timid in a pinch — and you should have no trouble here. (The Crystal Orb you'll receive afterward is a nice prize: It raises the user's MP by half.)

One more dragon to go. But once we wipe it out, how are we going to find the powerful Crusader that's released afterward?

The stairs to the rear take you up to the left side of a grand entryway, but a barrier at the top of the stairs prevents you from reaching the door itself.



Time to switch to Party C. It has lots of options. First, let's get the equipment Kefka has so thoughtfully left out for you to try on. Bring the team south, get Red Cap from the chest to the west, and take the party through the door just to the north. This puts you on a Magitek Factory-like catwalk — a long dead end with a Nutkin Suit (armor for Strago or Relm) and the Gauntlet relic.

(This could be an expensive diversion if you run into Scullions — another Lethal Weapon relative — so make it as quick as possible.)

Finally, bring the party all the way south and into the Magitek Factory. The chest at the bottom of the stairs contains Hero Ring, but don't explore. Go quickly to the roller belt to the north because the Magitek armor (Fortis) here is especially fierce. (Use high-level Bolt spells to put it in its place.)

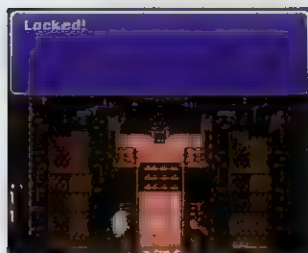
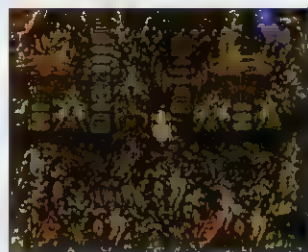
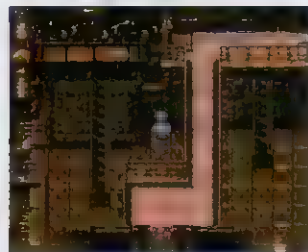
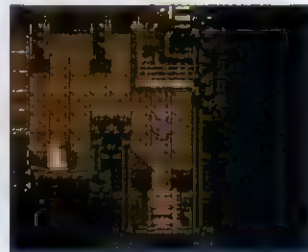
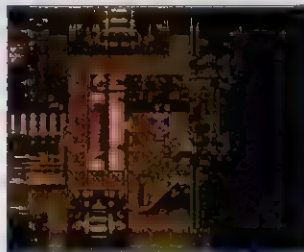
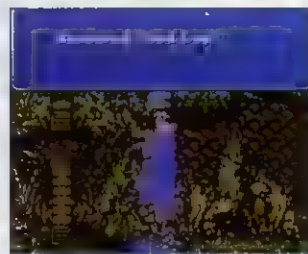
Once you've reached the other end of the roller belt, save the game immediately at the save point to the west. And watch your step here: You didn't open that chest to the south, but someone did, and if it's anything like the heavy-duty Magitek armor wandering through here, you'd rather not have anything to do with it.

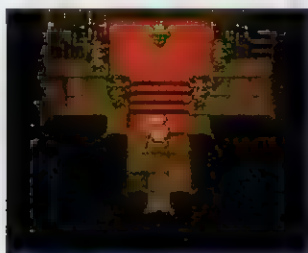
Well, as it happens, it's worse. Barely have you stepped to the top of the stairs to the west when something slides down from above and pounces on you.

Inferno and its claws, Striker and Rough, are a green version of the bladed blob you faced during the mine-train ride out of the Magitek Research Center, and these blades have a thing for replacing themselves after they've been axed. (It's like having to fight it twice.) Just hammer them with Ultima until they go down.

Once they've lost their edge, save again and move swiftly down the stairs and south through the storeroom below. Get the Megalixir from the chest in the east fork. Follow the west fork to the chest with the shining star and hit the A button. Nice work: You've cleared a path for Party A just to the west, which can now progress just a bit further — getting Tack Stars from the chest to the northwest and then bearing northeast through the door.

This takes Party A right up to Kefka's front door. It's locked — what a surprise — and you'll need to bring C up as well to help with the mechanism. Move C through the door east of the star chest and then north. (You can get Rainbow Brush for Relm by heading across the conveyor belt north of the chest, but it's probably not worth the hassle, given the extra combats involved in circling back to where you started.)



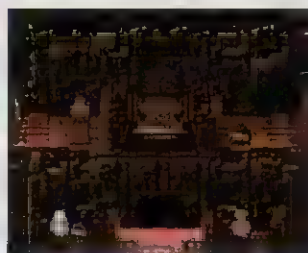
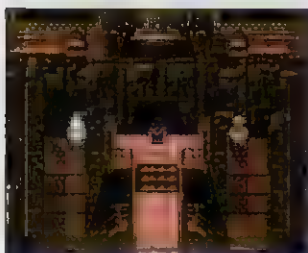


As on the left side, so on the right: This approach to Kefka's house is also guarded by a dragon. It's an important one, for the Skull Dragon is the last of the eight. Up to strength? Espers at the ready? Then go to it, man! It may be ugly, but it's hardly invincible, and a couple of Ultimas in combination with a concerted Esper attack — particularly Palidor's jumping attack — will do it in nicely.

You get the Muscle Belt relic (which raises the user's HP by half). And the Dragon Seal that kept Crusader locked away from the world is broken. You'll find it in your inventory.

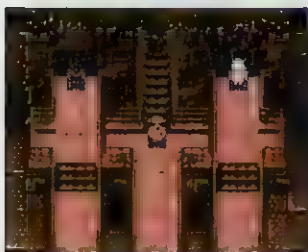


It? Yes. The last of the Magicite shards finally gives you access to the Merton spell — which you've seen used only by enemies — and to Meteor (which you should already have). It's also a very strong attack Esper — though a bit undirected, meaning it affects everyone on the playfield. Use it as a last resort.



OK, head up the stairs to join parties A and B on the landing in front of Kefka's front door. Position B on the left-hand button and C on the right, and have A open the door.

Move A inside and then out the left-hand door. Move B off the left button and have A push the weight down onto the button in its place. The extra weight is the trigger to remove the barrier at the top of the left-hand stairs.

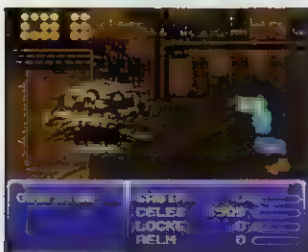


Now repeat the process. Bring B inside and out the right-hand door. After clearing C out of the way, push the weight here onto the right-hand button to clear the right-hand stairs.

You're in! Now, bring all three parties indoors and have each stand on the buttons at the north ends of their respective areas. This creates a bridge and a door in the central part of the north wall.

Is C in good shape? I hope so, because it's drawn one of the wildest battle to date. Remember the Guardian from your first visit to the imperial palace and the Kefka-versus-Leo standoff in Thamasa? Well, like so many other characters, it seems to have survived the magical apocalypse intact, and, as it was Gestahl's watchdog before, so it is Kefka's now.

The good news is that you can finally make a dent in it with your Espers — OK, so it's a 60,000 HP dent! — and particularly with Ultima. Just keep rolling those spells out, one after another, and it will eventually give up the ghost.



A victory in this battle royal reveals a save point and opens central stairs to the north of C. But before you go tearing off Kefka's head, give some thought to your brother and sister adventurers in A and B. They still have no place to go. What can be done?

Well, things have changed a bit behind you. C's exit to the south now leads out onto the balcony above the door. Step on the button here, and second doors will appear in the balconies to east and west. Bring A and B out onto these balconies and then north, and they'll wind up flanking C before a pair of doors.

Say, three doors, three statues. Do you suppose. . . ? Yup. You can do more than suppose. You've reached the statues' sanctuaries, the final step before your meeting with Kefka. Each party will take on one.

Naturally, they're not just stone anymore; Kefka's machinations have somehow brought the gods back to life. Doom, Goddess, and Poltergeist are formidable bosses, with around 60,000 HP each, but they don't seem to subscribe to the into-the-shredder tactics we've seen in some other high-level characters. It's as though they've been weakened.

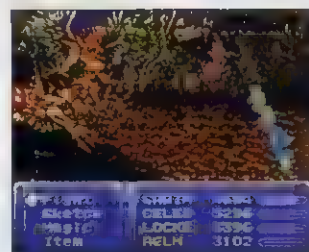
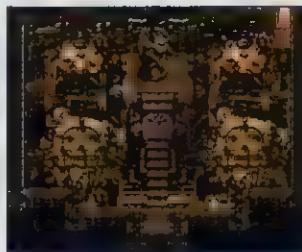
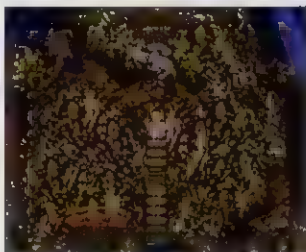
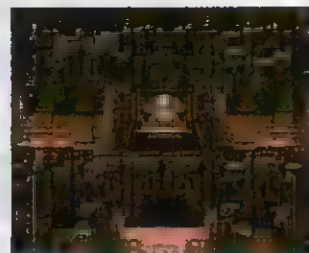
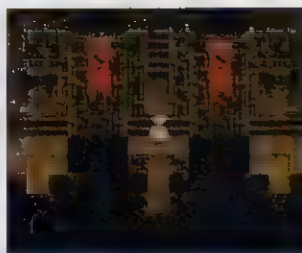
At any rate, you can beat them at no great cost. Just protect your spellcasters — you'll need Ultima to eat up HP — and blast away.

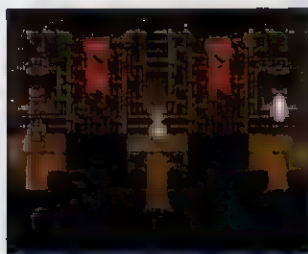
In each case, you'll be rewarded with a save point (C will have to move north to find it) and a potent weapon. Doom gives up the Sky Render sword (Cyan), and Strago can learn Forcefield Lore. Goddess will turn over Excalibur — a sword for use by Celes, Edgar, Locke, or Terra — provided you pay more attention to the monster below than the semi-clad lady she wears on her head. And Poltergeist will turn over Aura Lance (for Edgar or Mog).

Hey, Terra's still alive. And the party still has magic and Espers. This isn't what you expected. The statues were supposed to be the source of all magic.

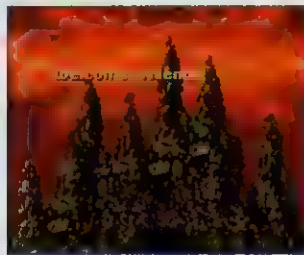
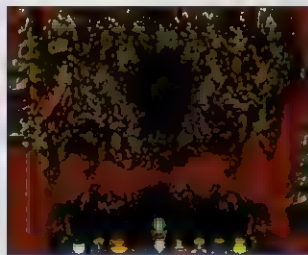
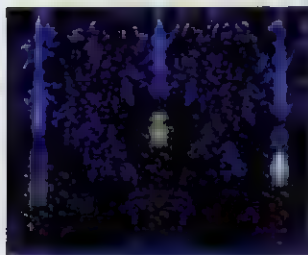
No wonder the statues seemed frail in combat; they had been drained. The thought of what all this power has done to Kefka is almost scary.

In a moment, we'll get to see.





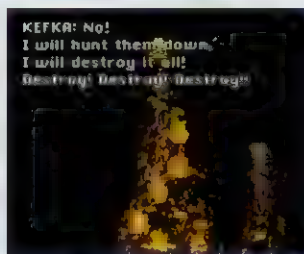
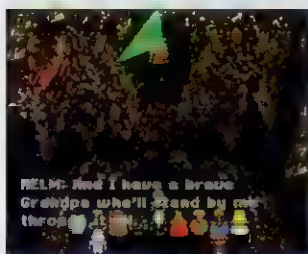
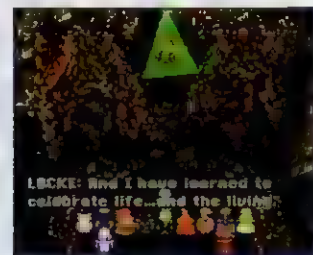
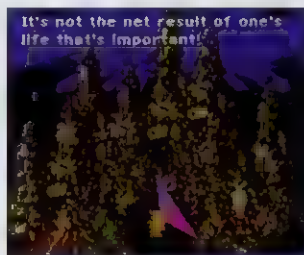
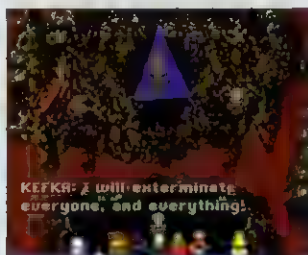
It's pretty clear what needs to be done here. A and B can move directly north and stand on buttons, and the button between them is for C. But how is C to get there? Well, do you see the hole in the floor just north of C's save point? You've seen lots like it. C can jump into this one, landing just south of its button.



Don't step on it quite yet. The next rest stop doesn't come until after you save what's left of the world. This is your last opportunity to spruce up your characters, grab a soda,

or take a bathroom break. (It's a very long fight.)

All set? OK, then. When the third party steps on its button, there comes a blue pulse of Esper-ish light, and the three parties are cast in green spotlights. When we see them next, they're broken down into their 12 component members, peering up at a mountain floating in a sick orange sky. . . and hear that familiar, whooping laughter.



Kefka! Finally, Kefka! He's always been a jerk, but now he seems to have lost it entirely. He answers the party's plea for an end to the destruction by suspending Locke and Edgar in mid-air and vowing to destroy everything and everyone.

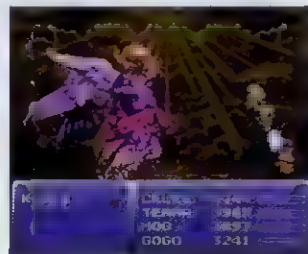
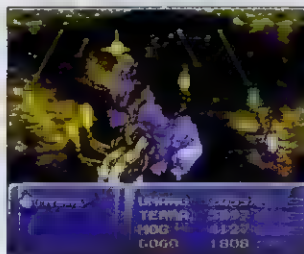
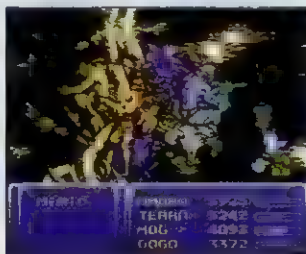
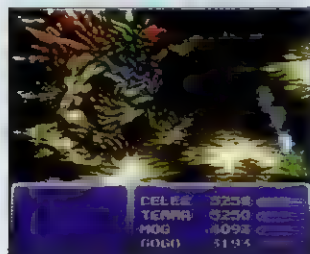
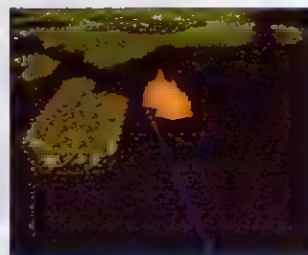
But, incredibly for all it's been through, the party still treats him like a human being and makes an effort to get through to him. Terra forthrightly answers that people will rebuild what he destroys, and Kefka returns he'll destroy that as well. He speaks to the triviality of life, its meaninglessness, but Terra again speaks up boldly for small victories, for the pleasures and trials of daily life, for love.



And each party member in turn adds his or her voice to Terra's — telling of the happy discoveries made within FF3. (Hey, poor Umario doesn't get to say a thing! Well, since Mog sort of brainwashed him into joining, he'd probably just go "U'raghhh!" anyway!)

It's nice of the party to try to talk Kefka down, but it's just not working. Kefka is sickened by the display — he expected a fight, not a lecture — and seems driven to greater extremes, rising atop a flaming peak and sending his Light of Judgment scorching across the land.

He's too consumed with hate and bloodlust to see reason. And finally, there's nothing to do but fight — and in an unusual manner. You have to put all 12 characters in a single Order of Battle for a struggle up the three-sectioned body of the vast, distorted creature — an organic version of Kefka's tower.

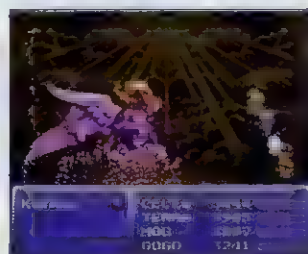
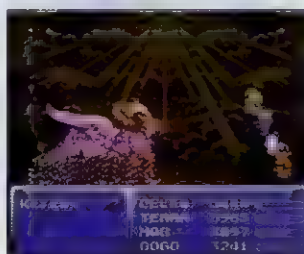


Put the serious spell casters first, the warriors second, and the more fragile types last. In fact, if you play your cards right, you probably won't need more than the first four: Celes, Terra, your third spellcaster (Mog, in this case), and Gogo.

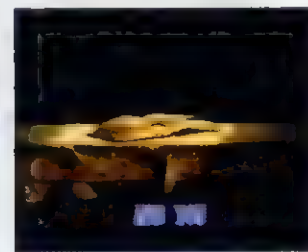
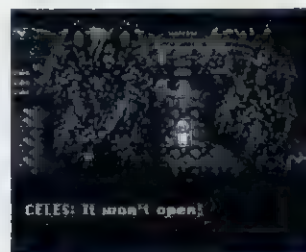
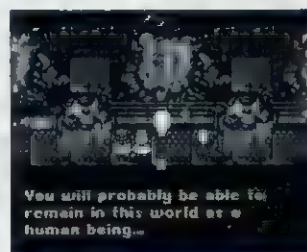
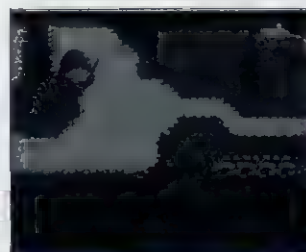
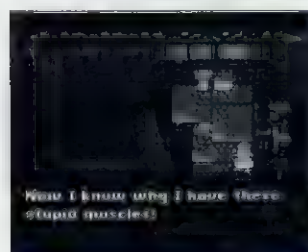
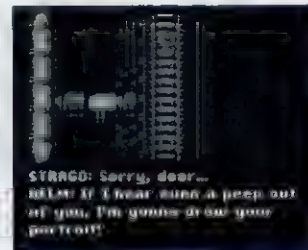
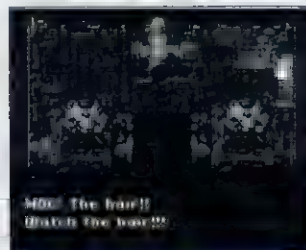
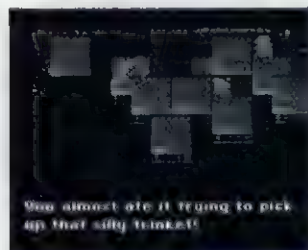
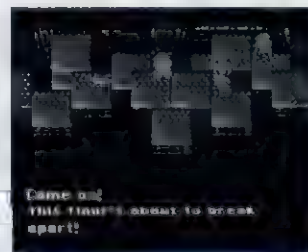
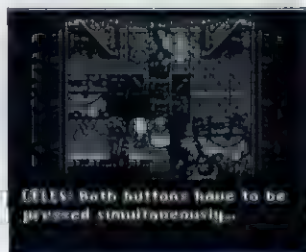
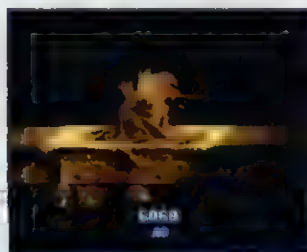
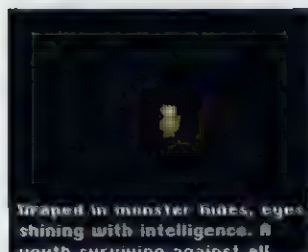
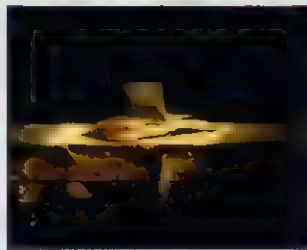
Then just start blindly laying out Ultimas, one on top of the other, and before long you'll be up to Kefka himself. He even looks like a god now — OK, a god in need of a comb — but don't let up. Continue the Ultimas until he does a slow dissolve. (Eight or so should do it.)

The world is safe! Kefka's reign of terror is at an end!

And that concludes the interactive portion of our program. The tower is beginning to give away, and the party must flee, with Terra leading the way — a weakened Terra, for magic is dying. The Magicite shards are beginning to vanish, and our heroine is beginning to deviate from her flight path. (Don't worry; the authors of this game aren't gonna kill off this little cutie.)



The Credits



Trapped in monster hides, eyes
shining with intelligence. A
youth surmounting all.

CELES

CELES: Both buttons have to be
pressed simultaneously...

Came on!
This thing's about to break
apart!!

You almost ate it trying to pick
up that silly tinket!

MOO

MOO: The hair!!
Watch the hair!!

STRAGO: Sorry, dear...
After all I hear men a peep out
of you, I'm gonna draw your
portrait!!

Now I know why I have these
stupid muscles!

STRIFE: Let's go that way!

STRAGO: Gotcha!

MADINE: TERRA...we must part
now. We Espers will disappear
from this world...
forever.

You will probably be able to
remain in this world as a
human being...

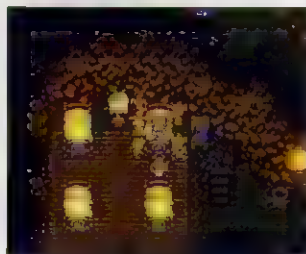
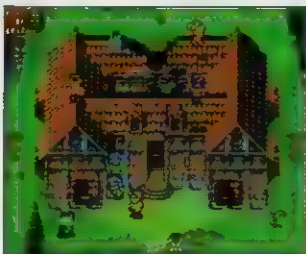
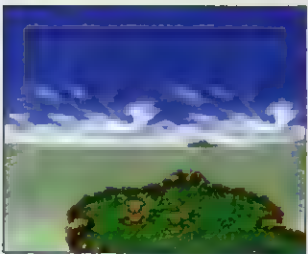
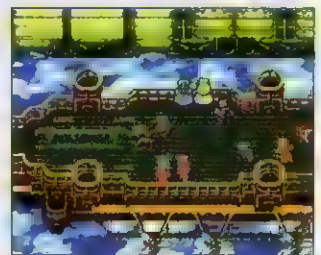
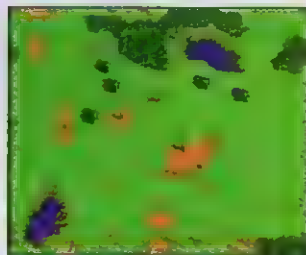
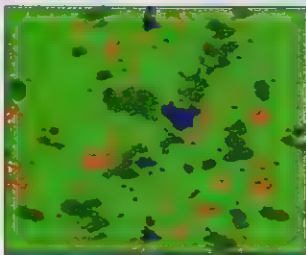
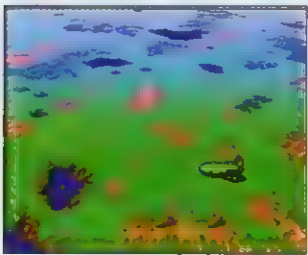
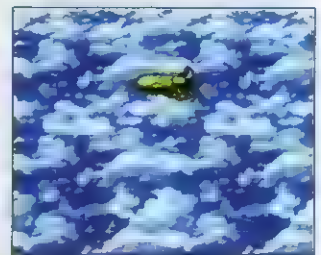
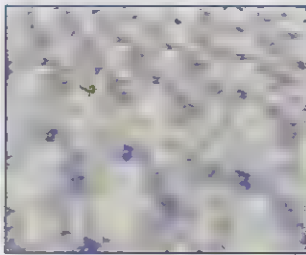
CELES: It won't open!



Hey, who said we're done? The game starts up the credits here, but don't you dare turn off the box. For this isn't simply a list of names, but a chance to learn all sorts of details about the characters. (Check out the realistic book with turning pages, and the great little animations.) Did you know they all have full names? Terra is Terra Branford. Cyan is Cyan Garamond. Relm's last name is Arrowny. (OK, OK, almost all of them. Mog is just Mog.)

You'll also be able to watch a slew of black-and-white action scenes that appear nowhere in the game — most of them set in Kefka's tower. It's a very movie-like touch, like running out-takes, and it's great fun. (Check out Mog's bit in particular!)

If Shadow wasn't rescued from the Floating Continent, he won't be pictured in person; a cutaway of his head will be shown looking down on a community that looks very like Thamasa. It has a certain "in memoriam" quality to it. Hope he made it.

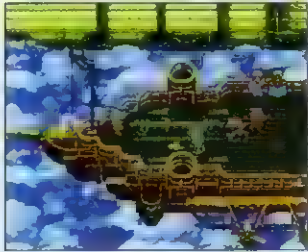




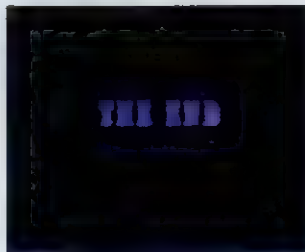
And then there's a whole wonderful airship sequence, with everyone up on deck and the world below coming to life again.

Now that is magic. Birds drift in a misty sky. Children gather on Baren Falls. Back in Mobliz, Katarin and Duane's child is born. The burned manor house in Thamasa is under repair. Chocobo cavalry is on the march in Figaro. Birds are returning to the spectral pool in the Phantom Forest.

In the northern part of Kohlingen, that reluctant seed has finally taken root.



And Terra, in the bow of the airship, points her face to the sky and lets her hair blow in the wind.



FINAL FANTASY III

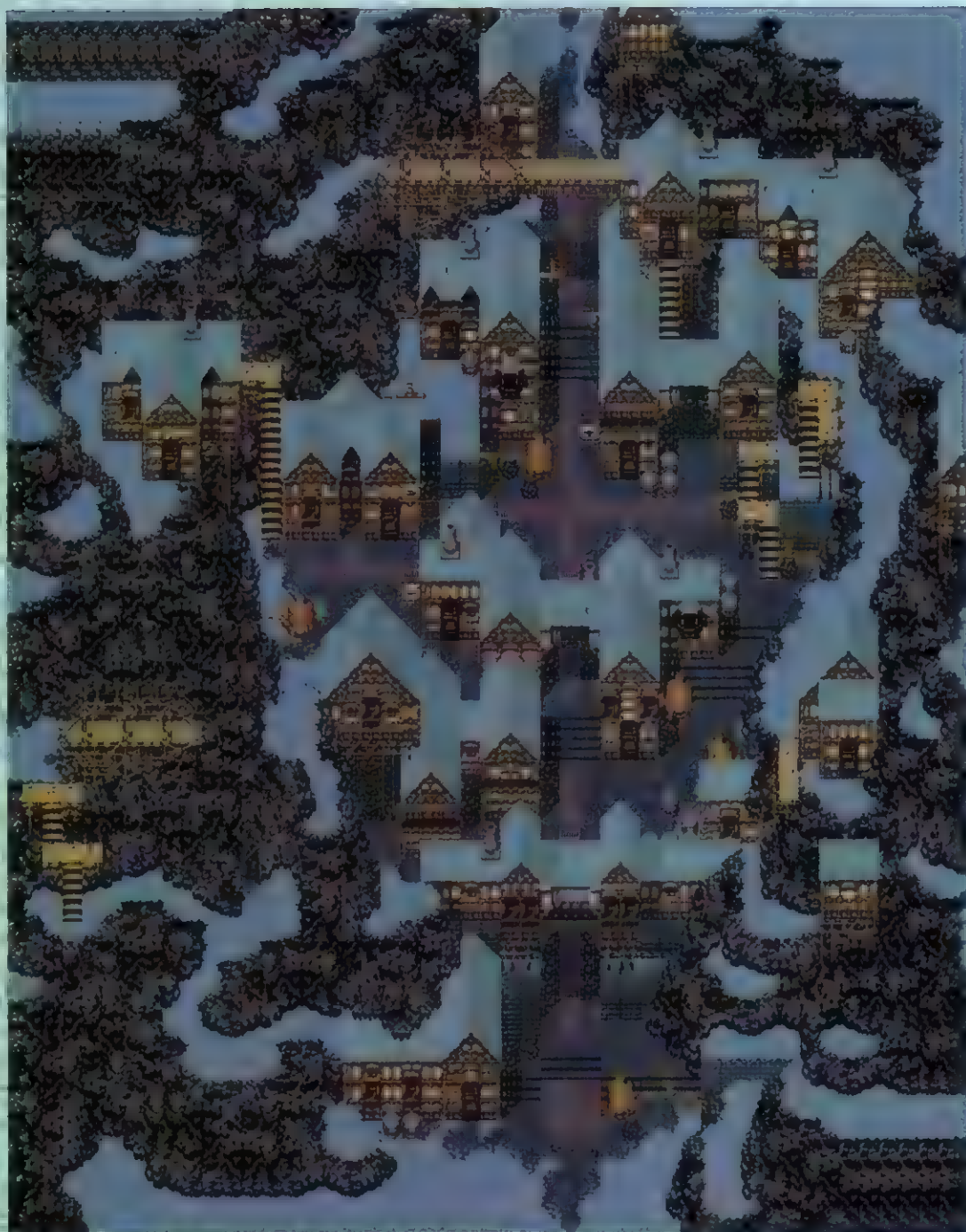
PART 9

MAPS OF FINAL FANTASY III

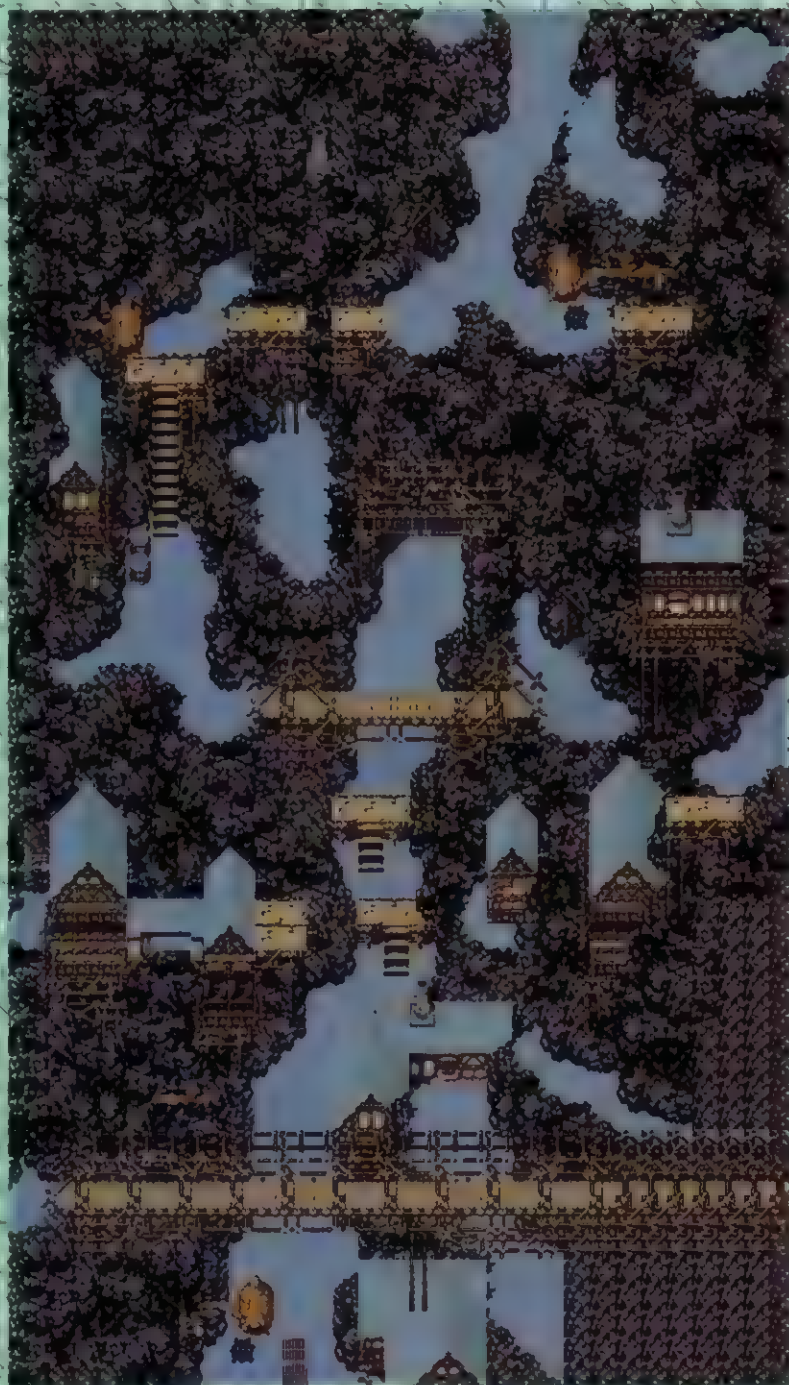




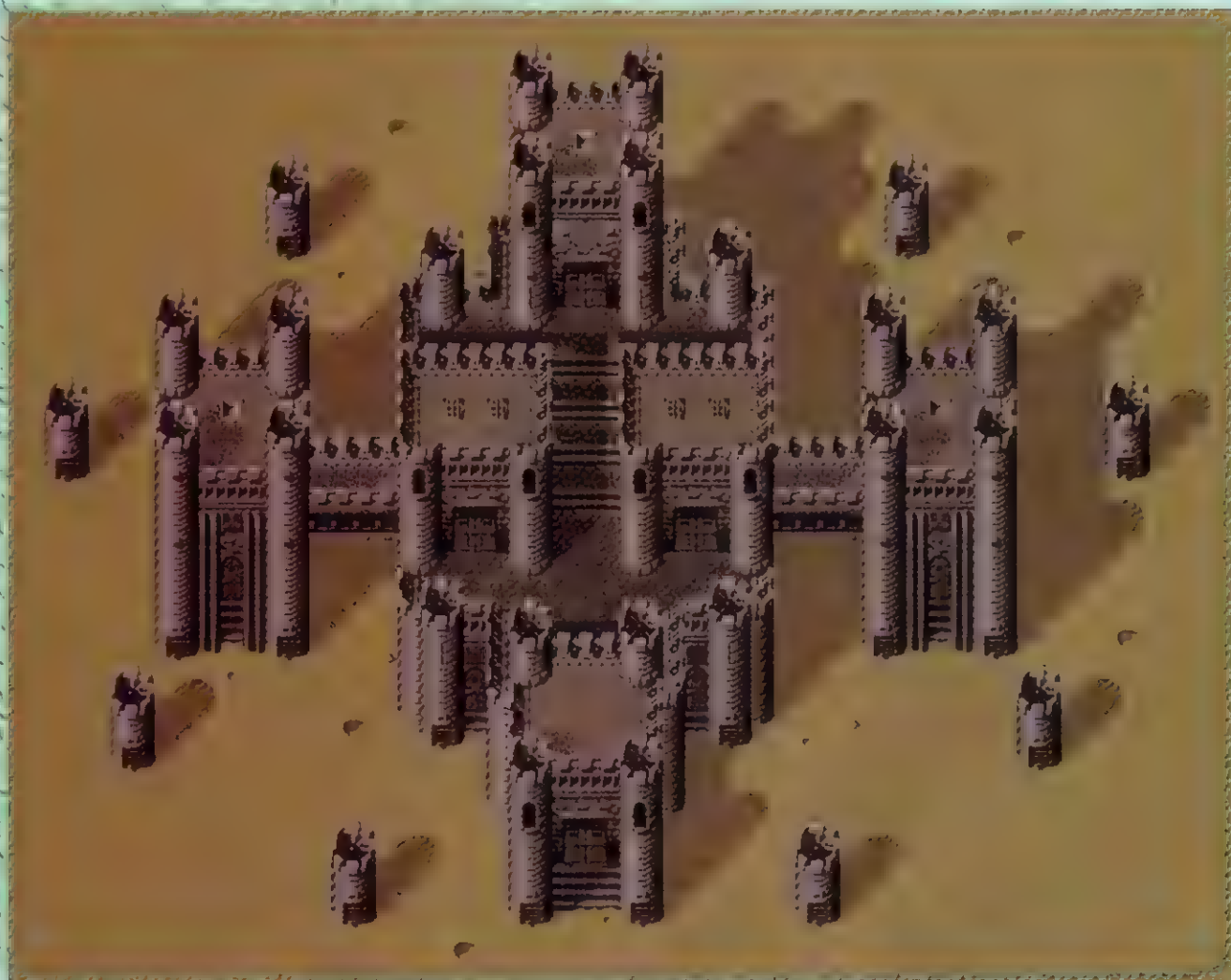
The world as it exists when FF3 begins. I like, right? You start out in Marsha, on the northern continent. It'll be a while until you find a way south — using Setzer's airship — to Imperial territory.



Marsha: A bustling northern town where the game opens. It's the party's base of operations in the early part of FF3.



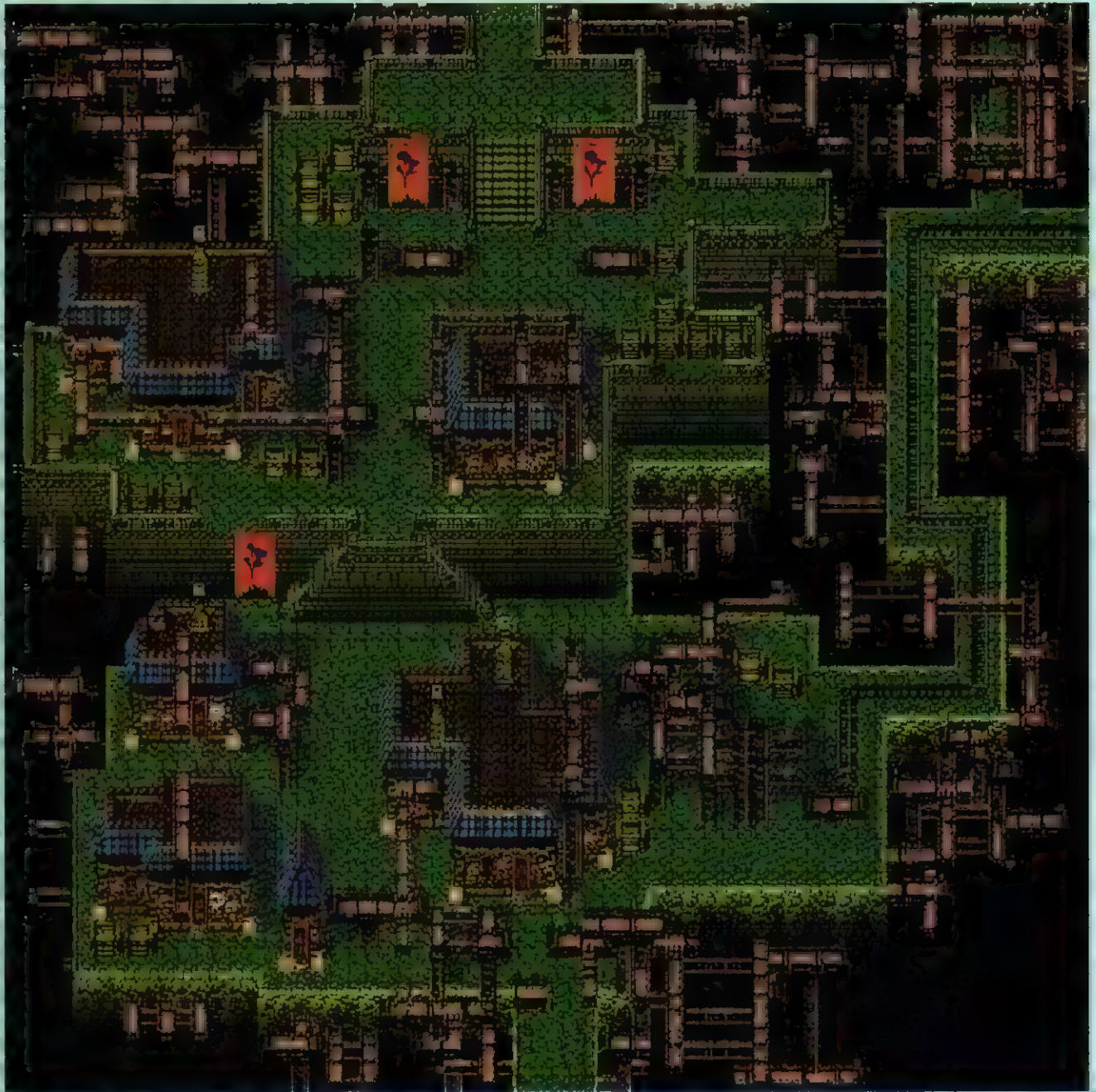
This is the northern tip of the industrial town of Marsha and shows entrances to the mine where a frozen Esper has been found.



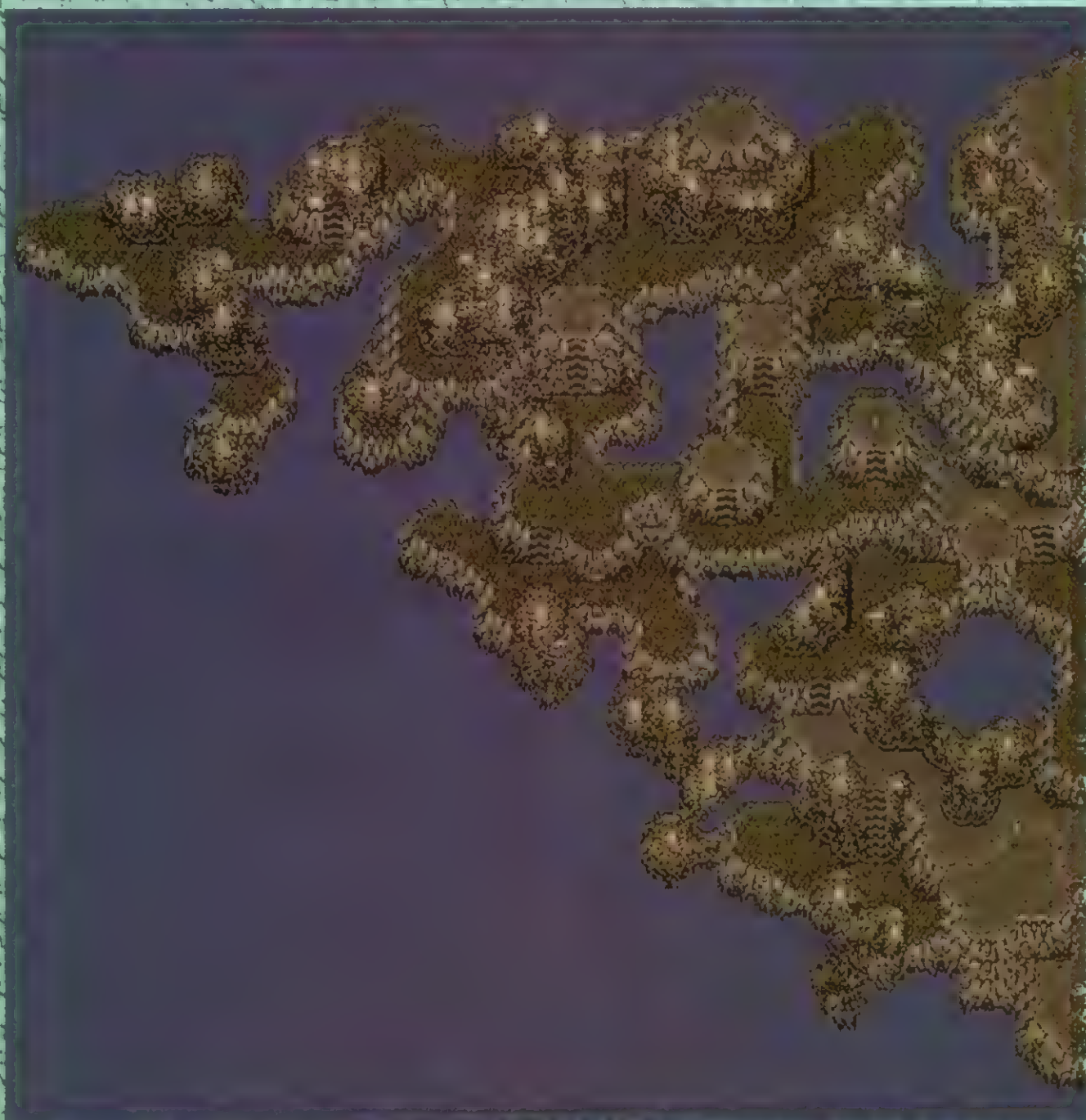
Figaro Castle: Edgar's desert palace is a great source for Tools... and even transportation. (It's the pathway into one of the game's most remote locations.)



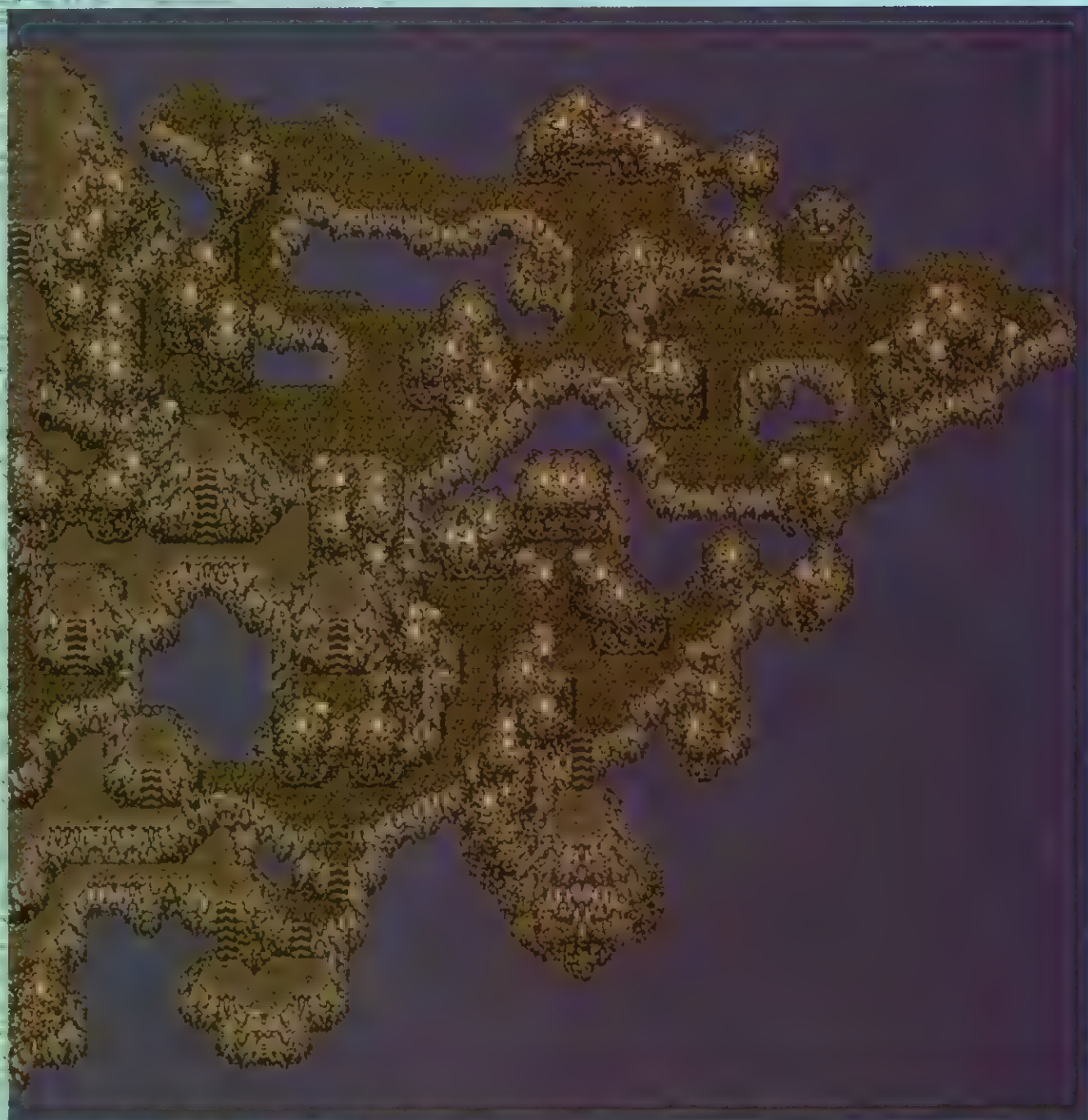
Doma Castle: Cyan's Home is laid waste by the evil Kefka early in the game. You can return there later to force the warrior to confront his inner demons.

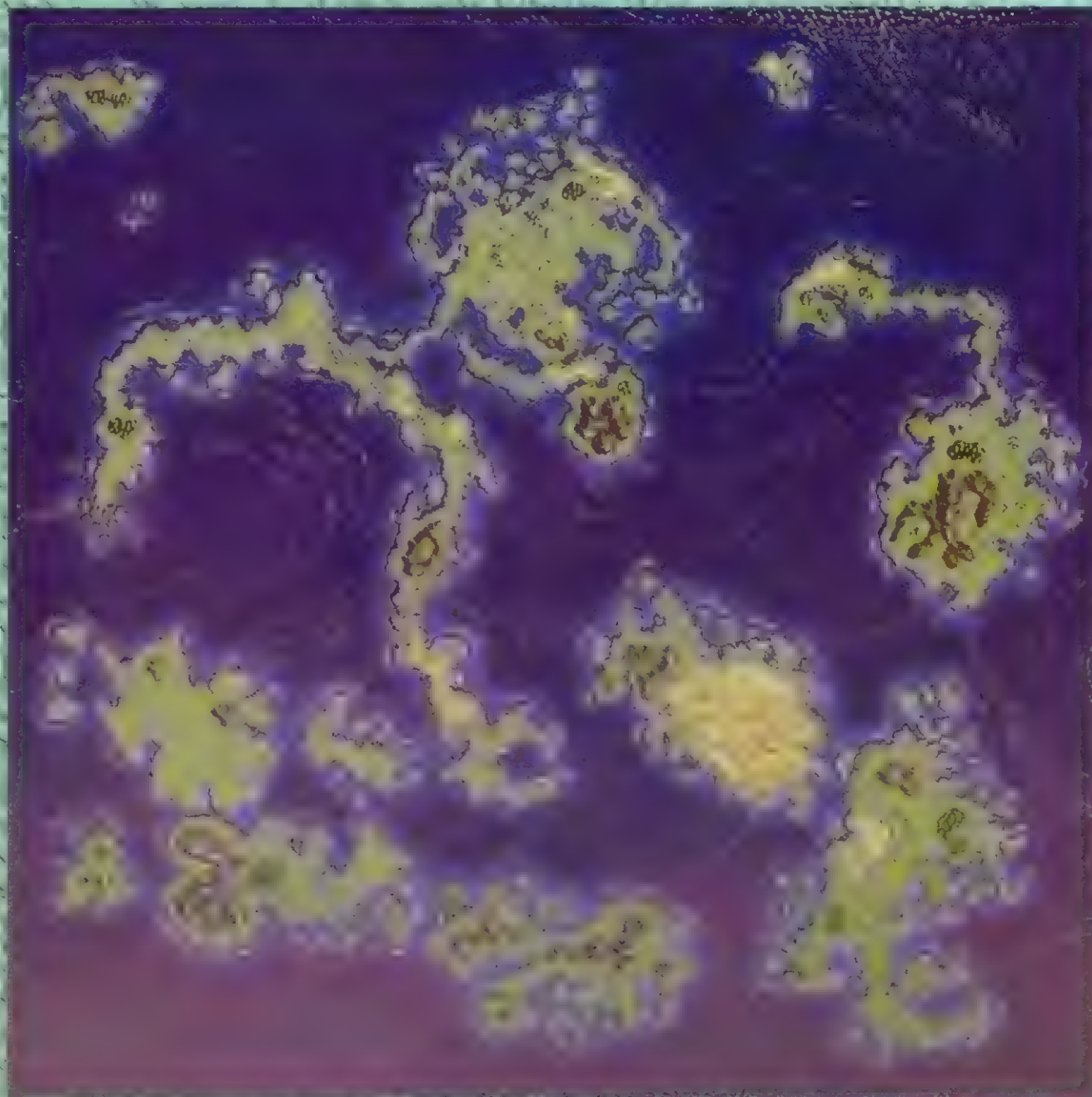


Vector: To the north of the imperial capital lies Gestahl's palace and the Magitek facilities.



The Floating Continent: It's one long, hard battle toward a faceoff with Kefka and Gestahl. You'll need to master its network of secret passages to find a way through.





Can't get there from here: This is the world after the magical cataclysm wrought by Kefka. It doesn't look much like it used to, does it? Most of the locations are still here, but they're shuffled around big-time.

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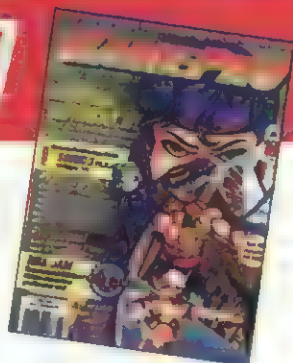
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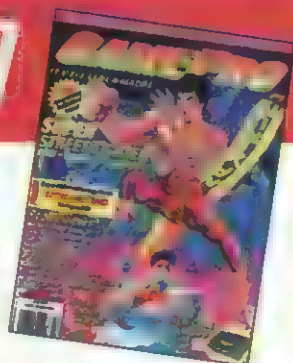
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Can I catch a ride?

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hand...

You were wrong. Dead wrong.

End your frustration and become a
master of the game with the
Final Fantasy III Players Guide.

In these pages, you'll get all the
clues, all the hints, and all the maps
you're going to need to survive your
quest across two worlds.



LOCKE: I believe our job is
finally over! I, for one, could
use some peace and quiet...

Peace and quiet?
Don't be so sure!



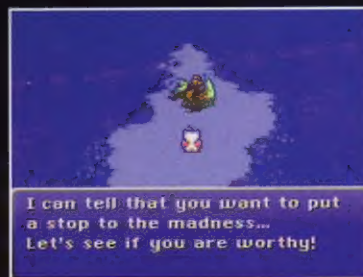
KEFKA: B...blood!?

Prepare to go
to battle!

Inside!

Find Out How To:

- Steal Terra from the Imperial Fighters!
- Use Magitek Weaponry to Your Advantage!
- Survive in Both Worlds!
- Reach and Defeat Kefka!



I can tell that you want to put
a stop to the madness...
Let's see if you are worthy!

Can you stop
the madness?



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